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02.21.05



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In the Management section, Former CIO Doug Lewis tells how to build a plan that will make sense, make you friends in the business and make a difference. **Page 31**

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## KNOWLEDGE CENTER IT MANAGEMENT

### Guide to Managing Vendors

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**SPECIAL REPORT** deals. Plus, we offer tips for screening those sales calls!

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**43 Opinion:** Managing IT vendors isn't something that stops at the corporate data center or even inside IT itself, says columnist Mark Hall.



## AOL Stalls New Netscape Release

America Online Inc. has delayed the release of the first public test version of its new Netscape Web browser until the end of the month to its home page. The beta version of Netscape 9 was scheduled for release last week. The browser, aimed at Microsoft Corp.'s Internet Explorer, is designed to defend against phishing scams and malicious code.

## ChoicePoint to Warn on ID Thefts

ChoicePoint Inc., a provider of credit and personal information, reached an agreement with 19 states to contact 145,000 consumers whose personal information—including names, Social Security numbers and credit reports—may have been stolen by identity thieves. ChoicePoint is working with law enforcement agencies to investigate last fall's alleged data theft, in which about 750 people so far have been victimized.

## The SEC Threatens SCO With Delisting

Unix vendor The SCO Group Inc. disclosed that it has been notified that it could soon be delisted by Nasdaq because the company hasn't yet filed its Form 10-K annual report for fiscal 2004. Under Securities and Exchange Commission rules, the form was due late last month. A SCO spokesman said the company has until Feb. 25 to file and avoid delisting.

## Sun Starts Selling Fujitsu Servers

Sun Microsystems Inc. has begun selling Fujitsu Ltd.'s PrimePower line of Unix servers, a first step in a plan to unify the companies' Sparc-based product lines by 2006. Sun and Fujitsu said they will jointly develop a line of Sparc systems, called the Advanced Product Line, to replace their Sun Fire and PrimePower machines.

# Handheld Risks Prompt Push for Usage Policies

Devices seen as next frontier for IT security threats

BY JAIKUMAR VIJAYAN

THE PROLIFERATION of handheld security risks posed by smart phones is "the next frontier for viruses, spam and other potential security threats," IBM's Global Business Security Index Report, which offers a quarterly analysis of worldwide IT security trends, cited a growing number of viruses that target handhelds, including a recent one called "Cuber."

"It is likely that some of which are personally owned by end users, leaving companies vulnerable to data losses and privacy breaches."

"Companies need to bite the bullet and address this problem now," said David Melnick, a security consultant at DvSec Inc., a Littleton, Colo., firm. New York. Drawing much of the concern is the proliferating use of handheld devices for accessing corporate e-mail, storing sensitive data and run-

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## Security Considerations

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encrypt all sensitive corporate data stored on their handhelds, he said.

But implementing such measures has been a challenge, Gilpin added. The relative lack of client software for enabling protected access from handheld devices has made it hard for users to log in via Boeing's VPN, he said. Similarly, it's hard to apply a consistent approach to securing the devices because they're made by many different manufacturers and come with vari-

ous operating systems, he said. Handheld-related security issues need to be made part of broader security planning processes for wireless LANs, said Djinis Blanchette, director of telecommunications and IT at DvSec Inc., a Montreal-based law firm.

For now, DvSec Blanchette's security measures for handheld devices, Blanchette said. Instead the firm is focusing on deploying an intrusion-detection system to secure wireless access for lawyers using laptops. "Ultimately, though, it is all going to be part of the same problem," he said.

A good place to begin securing handhelds is to understand how they get into the enterprise, what kind of information is stored on them and how they're used to access corporate networks, Melnick said. Eventually, companies will need plans that provide auditing, monitoring and policy enforcement capabilities, he added. "This is a new, unbudgeted area of responsibility for IT," Melnick said.

□ 52709

## MORE NEWS ONLINE

Bill Gates says Microsoft is developing a more secure version of Internet Explorer

Weekend 50637  
www.computerworld.com

# Symantec Continues Effort to Sell Veritas Deal

SAN FRANCISCO

Symantec Corp. CEO John Thompson last week found himself again defending his company's planned acquisition of Veritas Software Corp. amid continuing concerns about Symantec's strategy and Microsoft Corp.'s looming presence in the IT security market.

Addressing reporters during a roundtable discussion at the RSA Conference 2006 here, Thompson rebutted suggestions that the Veritas merger is a defensive move driven by Microsoft's growing ambitions in the security market. "I couldn't care less about what Microsoft does," he said. "We are convinced that we can

whip Microsoft into the market."

Instead, he said, Symantec's purchase should be viewed as a strategic expansion of its technology offerings in response to a need among IT managers for integrated software supporting data integrity and availability.

Symantec and Veritas executives are being pressed to justify the merger agreement they announced in December. Last month, for example, Veritas CEO Gary Bloom acknowledged that it has been difficult to convince the storage management

software vendor's users and investors that the deal will benefit them (Quick, No. 52080).

But several large Symantec users who took part in the panel voiced support for the Cupertino, Calif.-based company's strategy.

There is a growing need for sets of tools that can help users improve both the security and availability of stored data, said Tom Jones, director of security at California's Health and Human Services Agency.

Jones added that the agency faces a huge challenge in protecting

the more than 300TB of data it stores. Much of the data is personal health information, and using point products to manage and secure it won't be good enough in the long term, he said.

Chevron-Elcamo Corp. has begun taking a more integrated view of the security risks its systems face, said Richard Jackson, the company's chief information protection officer. Chevron-Elcamo's IT infrastructure includes about 40,000 desktop PCs, 6,000 laptops and 750 servers worldwide, and it stores more than 50TB of data. "Decision quality is critical, so integrity of data is crucial," Jackson said.

—Jai Kumar Vijayan



Veritas Software CEO Gary Bloom acknowledges that it has been difficult to convince the storage management



## AT DEADLINE

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## Handheld Risks Prompt Push for Usage Policies

Devices seen as 'next frontier' for IT security threats

BY JAIKUMAR VILVIAN  
IN WASHINGTON

THE INCREASING security risk posed by handheld devices is creating a need for formal policies governing their use in corporate settings, according to IT managers and analysts who attended the RSA Conference 2005 here last week.

They added that a failure to pay attention to the threat posed by handhelds, many of which are personally owned by end users, leaves companies vulnerable to data losses and privacy breaches.

"Companies need to bite the bullet and address this problem now," said David Melnick, a security consultant at DeLoitte & Touche LLP in New York. Driving much of the concern is the proliferating use of handheld devices for accessing corporate e-mail, storing sensitive data and run-

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IBM's Global Business Security Index Report, which offers a quarterly analysis of worldwide IT security trends, cited a growing number of viruses that target handhelds, including a recent one called Cabir. "It is likely that such worms will be used by copycats and may spur an epidemic of viruses aimed at mobile devices," the IBM report said.

Chuck Gilpin, a St. Louis-based network architect at The Boeing Co., said that such concerns have prompted the aircraft maker to require handheld and mobile users to use a virtual private network (VPN) to gain access to its corporate network. Boeing also mandates that users en-

## Security Considerations

crypt all sensitive corporate data stored on their handhelds, he said.

But implementing such measures has been a challenge. Gilpin added. The relative lack of client software for enabling protected access from handheld devices has made it hard for users to log in via Boeing's VPN, he said.

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## MORE NEWS ONLINE

Bit Setix says Microsoft is developing a secure search version of Internet Explorer.

QuickLink 52857  
www.computerworld.com

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## BRIEFS

## M&amp;A Expert Named To New CA Post

Computer Associates International Inc. named Michael Christenson to a new post, executive vice president for strategy and business development. Christenson, 46, retired last year from Citigroup Global Markets Holdings Inc. after a 20-year investment banking career. He reports to Chief Operating Officer Jeff Clarke and will lead corporate planning and strategy as well as merger and acquisition activities.

## Alliance Extends Security Specs

The Liberty Alliance has released a draft version of ID-WF 2.0, its set of specifications for identity verification for Web services. The specifications have been extended to support SAML 2.0, which should make it easier for developers adopting SAML to implement Identity Web Services Framework specifications for managing identity-based Web services, alliance officials said.

## HP Q1 Results Beat Wall Street Forecast

Hewlett-Packard Co. reported first-quarter earnings and a 10% increase in revenue, surpassing Wall Street expectations.

## HP BY THE NUMBERS

Q1 2006	\$2.16B	\$2.43B
Q1 2005	\$1.95B	\$2.16B

## NetScout Buys Quantiva for \$9M

NetScout Systems Inc., a developer of enterprise-wide network and application performance management products, said it has agreed to buy the business and assets of privately held Quantiva Inc. for \$9 million in cash. Quantiva is a maker of automated analytics systems for application performance management. The deal is expected to close by the end of June.

## ON THE MARK

HOT TECHNOLOGY TRENDS, NEW PRODUCT NEWS AND INDUSTRY GOSSIP BY MARK HALL



## Investigators Try To Track Down ...

... eBay microbots who peddle unauthorized IT gear. "It's cat-and-mouse PI work to catch them, but we do get them," boasts Joe Loomis, president of Net Enforcers Inc. in Coral Springs, Fla. His company is hired by firms trying to protect their brands and their author-

ized resellers and distributors by cracking down on sales outside official channels. San Jose-based eBay Inc.'s Web site is the Mecca for gray-market sellers — and a magnet for many corporate IT buyers looking for good deals. "There's more gray-market activity on eBay than legitimate," Loomis claims. Alec Campbell, director of business development at BuySafe Inc. in Alexandria, Va., concurs. "It's the biggest area of fraud recognized online," he says. BuySafe offers sellers of legitimate goods a policy that insures buyers for up to \$25,000 on anything they purchase via the popular auction site. "We've done due diligence on the back end to ensure that the merchants are legitimate and trustworthy," Campbell says. The gray market for computers has existed for decades, but eBay makes it easier to sell the gear from unauthorized sources at

prices not approved by the manufacturers. eBay didn't return calls for comment.

CA sticks its toe in the waters ... of integrated IT management. Talk about counterintuitive. While rivals

such as IBM and Compuware Corp. bought companies to help them deliver IT management dashboards, Computer Associates International Inc. — known for buying just about any company with bits on a disc — settled for a partnership and not a marriage. According to Shari Shore, a vice president of product marketing at CA, a deal announced last month with Niku Corp. in Redwood City, Calif., will provide "out-of-the-box integration" between Niku's Clarity 7.5 software and CA's Service Desk, Configuration Manager and Business Process

Manager tools. Expect to open such a box sometime in Q2. Until then, CA and Niku offer customized books from CA's IT management apps to Clarity, a tool used to translate IT operational activity into financial metrics that chief financial officers and CEOs can comprehend. In a report about the deal, Forrester Research Inc. analysts called CA's move "positive" but observed that "CA crawls where it should be jogging."

## IT certification training takes a cue from ...

... the digital entertainment industry. IT managers have been complaining to certification authorities that "book learning isn't enough," says Martin Bean, chief operating officer at Net Horizons Computer Learning Centers Inc. in Anaheim, Calif. New Horizons, which has 255 training centers in 55 countries,

conducts certification training and testing for companies such as Microsoft Corp. and Cisco Systems Inc. (The actual certifications, such as Cisco Certified Internet Expert or Microsoft Certified Engineer, are bestowed by the vendors.) Bean says IT "cees want less book smarts and more hands-on expertise. To get it, he says, "the learning industry can take from the gaming industry." What's needed are realistic simulation tests, he argues, noting that his company

is adding such capabilities to its curriculum. "We need better scenarios that are fun," Bean says. At least just as much fun as troubleshooting servers and routers in your data center.

## Print management goes the ASP ...

... made with a new hosted service. This week, L2 Solutions Inc. in Palo Alto, Calif., will begin offering its Fuse print management software on an application service provider basis. L2's ASP pricing starts at \$500 per month. Whip Printz, L2's CEO, claims that large organizations can reduce costs by up to 25% by managing print needs through Fuse. The software lets you set print policies and designate approved print shops for different types of jobs. It also lets you control who can send work to a specific printer and ensure that print jobs have the proper approvals. In addition, Fuse can group similar jobs together to lower costs. In the future, Fuse will let you initiate and manage bids from printing businesses, Printz says.

## Today, it's spyware, tomorrow ...

... it will be something else. There's always some new security problem that IT workers, and the next "something else" is likely to be Bluetooth. So says Dennis Seersma, vice president of business development at SecureWave SA in Luxembourg. "Bluetooth will be the next threat vector for how malware will come into your system," Seersma predicts. If you're still using blacklists to help protect your users, you're wasting your time. "Blacklists are futile," he argues. According to Seersma, the most effective anti-malware weapon is a white-list of applications that you permit to run on a machine. What end users can't execute won't hurt your company, he says. ☐ 020606



Martin Bean, ASP

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# Fed Agencies Get a D+ In Computer Security

But CISOs claim that the grading process is flawed

BY JERIMIAN VILAKAN

**T**HE OFFICIAL security of federal government computer systems garnered only a D+ average in the 2004 security report card released last week by the House Government Reform Committee. A year earlier, the average grade was a D.

At the same time, a survey of 80 federal chief information security officers (CISOs) found a need for "significant" improvements in the reform committee's evaluation criteria.

Seven of the 24 agencies graded, including the departments of Homeland Security, Energy, and Health and Human Services, scored an F for the second consecutive year. Rep. Tom Davis (R-Va.), chairman of the Government

Reform Committee, said at a press conference that government agencies are generally "moving in the right direction" on security. But the 2004 grades also contain significant bad news, Davis added. "We need to move faster, and I hope it won't take some kind of cyber [attack] to crystallize everybody," he said.

Among the agencies showing the most progress last year were the Department of Transportation, which improved from an A- from a D+ in 2003; the Department of Justice, which received a B+ after failing a year earlier; and the Department of the Interior, which was given a C+ after getting an F in 2003.

The annual Federal Computer Security Report Card is based on evaluations as defined in the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002. The evaluations are compiled by the committee based on information

provided by each agency's inspector general.

The key value of the report card is in learning what actually works to improve security, said Alan Falter, research director at SANS Institute, a Bethesda, Md.-based training company. "A large number of grades went down, a few went up — a lot. What allowed those who increased to do so?" he asked.

## New Tools Help

George Botina, director of IT security at the Environmental Protection Agency, said that much of his agency's improved showing stemmed from the organization's use of automated tools for compliance verification and monitoring.

In a comment relayed via a department spokeswoman, Vance Hitch, CIO at the Justice Department, said that "operational enhancements and development of new tools and skills" led to the dramatic

improvement shown by the agency in 2004.

The survey of CISOs, conducted by Ashburn, Va.-based Telos Corp., gave a C grade to the Federal Computer Security Report Card itself.

According to 60% of the CISOs surveyed, the report card provides useful insight into their security preparedness. But the same amount questioned the report card's real impact, noting that agency funding for IT security was not affected by bad grades.

"What is the purpose of evaluating and grading if there is no incentive for good performance and no repercussions for poor performance?" said Richard Tracy, chief security officer at Telos.

The Telos report was based on telephone surveys of CISOs from one-fourth of all federal agencies, according to the company.

In response to the survey results and the concerns expressed in the Telos report, Davis last week announced the creation of the CISO Exchange, a public-private initiative focused on giving federal CISOs more of a voice in improving federal cybersecurity.

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## Federal Computer Security Report Card

Department of Transportation	
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	
Environmental Protection Agency	
Department of Justice	
Department of the Interior	
Department of State	
Department of the Treasury	
Department of Defense	
NASA	
Department of Commerce	
Department of Energy	
Department of Homeland Security	

"An independent evaluation from the agency's inspector general was submitted in 2003.

## Pharmaceutical, Health Care Firms Launch RFID Projects

BY HEATHER HAVENSTEIN  
DAVID APT

Radio frequency identification technology is generating interest from pharmaceutical companies as a way to deter illegal drug trafficking and from health care executives who are trying to keep tabs on medical equipment.

Last year, Stamford, Conn.-based Purdue Pharma LP announced plans to become one of the first pharmaceutical companies to integrate RFID into packaging at the manufacturing level to prevent counterfeiting. And last week at the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society's conference here, Purdue and Symbol Technologies Inc. said they plan to use Symbol's RFID

mobile computers to further that effort.

"We have to identify counterfeit drugs before they penetrate our supply chain, and identify vulnerabilities in our supply chain," said Aaron Graham, vice president and chief security officer at Purdue. "While there may not be an ROI in dollars, how do you put a price on patient safety?"

The Symbol MC9000-G computers, which combine RFID and bar-code reading with imaging and wireless connectivity, will be provided without charge to state and federal law enforcement agencies for

use in efforts to stop illegal drug trafficking, Graham said.

The Food and Drug Administration has recommended RFID as the best way to thwart illegal drug trafficking, and several states, including Florida and California, have passed laws requiring pharmaceutical companies to track drug shipments as they move through

the supply chain. Purdue has already added RFID tags to bottles of two of its pain relief drugs, Graham said. RFID readers capture tag information at stations along the manufacturing line.

By the end of the year, Pfizer Inc. will be adding RFID tags

to bottles of Viagra, and it plans to use the technology to prevent thefts of other products, said Bryant Haskins, a spokesman for the company.

Most pharmaceutical makers have started pilots using RFID to deter counterfeiting, said Bob Goodman, an analyst at The Yankee Group in Boston. But many are struggling with the cost of RFID tags — about 30 cents per bottle, compared with one cent per bottle for bar codes, he said.

Meanwhile, some hospitals are beginning to use RFID to help staff locate pieces of medical equipment more quickly. Glen Allen, Va.-based Agility Healthcare Solutions last week announced that Presbyterian Healthcare Services in Albuquerque will use its RFID-en-

abled equipment management system to track 6,000 pieces of mobile medical equipment at Presbyterian Hospital.

The hospital projects a 200% ROI over five years by reducing equipment rental costs and labor, said Jason Fehrlinger, Presbyterian's materials management administrator.

Two months ago, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston started to track emergency-room equipment using RFID tags and asset management technology from PanGo Networks Inc. in Framingham, Mass. The technology has boosted efficiency in locating devices, said John Halamka, CIO at CareGroup Inc., Beth Israel's parent company.

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## MORE THIS ISSUE

CardGroup's John Halamka tells RFID get under his skin — **Special Page 16**



"How do you put a price on patient safety?" asks AARON GRAHAM.



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But CISOs claim that the grading process is flawed

BY JAMESMAN VLAHAKIS

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Reform Committee, said at a press conference that government agencies are generally "moving in the right direction" on security. But the 2004 grades also contain significant bad news, Davis added. "We need to move faster, and I hope it won't take some kind of cyber [attack] to crystallize everybody," he said.

Among the agencies showing the most progress last year were the Department of Transportation, which improved to an A- from a D+ in 2003; the Department of Justice, which received a B+ after failing a year earlier; and the Department of the Interior, which was given a C+ after getting an F in 2003.

The annual Federal Computer Security Report Card is based on evaluations as defined in the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002. The evaluations are compiled by the committee based on information

provided by each agency's inspector general.

The key value of the report card is in learning what actually works to improve security, said Alan Paller, research director at SANS Institute, a Bethesda, Md.-based training company. "A large number of grades went down, a few went up — a lot. What allowed those who increased to do so?" he asked.

## New Tools Help

George Bonina, director of IT security at the Environmental Protection Agency, said that much of his agency's improved showing stemmed from the organization's use of automated tools for compliance verification and monitoring.

In a comment relayed via a department spokeswoman, Vance Hitch, CIO at the Justice Department, said that "organizational enhancements and development of new tools and skills" led to the dramatic

improvement shown by the agency in 2004.

The survey of CISOs, conducted by Ashburn, Va.-based Telos Corp., gave a C grade to the Federal Computer Security Report Card itself.

According to 60% of the CISOs surveyed, the report card provides useful insight into their security preparedness. But the same amount questioned the report card's real impact, noting that agency funding for IT security was not affected by bad grades.

"What is the purpose of evaluating and grading if there is no incentive for good performance and no repercussions for poor performance?" said Richard Tracy, chief security officer at Telos.

The Telos report was based on telephone surveys of CISOs from one-fourth of all federal agencies, according to the company.

In response to the survey results and the concerns expressed in the Telos report, Davis last week announced the creation of the CISO Exchange, a public-private initiative focused on giving federal CISOs more of a voice in upgrading federal cybersecurity.

© 52707

## Federal Computer Security Report Card

A-	D-
B+	A
B	C
B-	F
C+	F
D+	F
D-	D
D	D
D-	D-
F	C-
F	F
F	F

"No independent evaluation from the agency's inspector general was submitted in 2003."

## Pharmaceutical, Health Care Firms Launch RFID Projects

BY HEATHER HAVENSTEIN  
DALLAS

Radio frequency identification technology is generating interest from pharmaceutical companies as a way to deter illegal drug trafficking and from health care executives who are trying to keep tabs on medical equipment.

Late last year, Stamford Conn.-based Purdue Pharma LP announced plans to become one of the first pharmaceutical companies to integrate RFID into packaging at the manufacturing level to prevent counterfeiting. And last week at the Healthcare Information Systems Society's conference here, Purdue and Symbol Technologies Inc. said they plan to use Symbol's RFID

mobile computers to further that effort.

"We have to identify counterfeit drugs before they penetrate our supply chain, and identify vulnerabilities in our supply chain," said Aaron Graham, vice president and chief security officer at Purdue. "While there may not be an ROI in dollars, how do you put a price on patient safety?"

The Symbol MC9000-G computers, which combine RFID and bar-code reading with imaging and wireless connectivity, will be provided without charge to state and federal law enforcement agencies for

use in efforts to stop illegal drug trafficking, Graham said.

The Food and Drug Administration has recommended RFID as the best way to thwart illegal drug trafficking, and several states, including Florida and California, have passed laws requiring pharmaceutical companies to track drug shipments as they move through the supply chain.

Purdue has already added RFID tags to bottles of two of its pain relief drugs, Graham said. RFID readers capture tag information at stations along the manufacturing line.

By the end of the year, Pfizer Inc. will be adding RFID tags

to bottles of Viagra, and it plans to use the technology to prevent thefts of other products, said Bryant Haskins, a spokesman for the company.

Most pharmaceutical makers have started pilots using RFID to deter counterfeiting, said Bob Goodman, an analyst at The Yankee Group in Boston. But many are struggling with the cost of RFID tags — about 30 cents per bottle, compared with one cent per bottle for bar codes, he said.

Meanwhile, some hospitals are beginning to use RFID to help staff locate pieces of medical equipment more quickly. Glen Allen, Va.-based Agility Healthcare Solutions last week announced that Presbyterian Healthcare Services in Albuquerque will use its RFID-en-

abled equipment management system to track 6,000 pieces of mobile medical equipment at Presbyterian Hospital.

The hospital projects a 200% ROI over five years by reducing equipment rental costs and labor, said Jason Feinlander, Presbyterian's materials management administrator.

Two months ago, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston started to track emergency-room equipment using RFID tags and asset management technology from PanGo Networks Inc. in Framingham, Mass. The technology has boosted efficiency in locating devices, said John Halama, CIO at CareGroup Inc., Beth Israel's parent company.

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## NAME THIS ISSUE

Conference's John Halama lists RFID get under his skin — Really Page 18





# INTEL RUNS SAP



**AND HERE'S WHY:** Intel rolled out SAP's supply chain management solution company-wide to help them respond quickly to market changes, obtain raw materials and produce more products. The combination of Intel® Itanium® 2 processor-based servers and SAP® software delivered enhanced performance, lower cost of ownership and the flexibility to adapt. Visit [sap.com/intel](http://sap.com/intel) or call 800 880 1727 for more information.

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## BRIEFS

## HP Details Florida Severance Package

Two days after the ouster of Carly Fiorina, Hewlett-Packard Co. detailed the severance package for its former chairman and CEO in a regulatory filing. Fiorina will get a cash payout of \$21.4 million, \$50,000 for financial counseling, and legal and outplacement services. She will keep her PC equipment and technical support for three months. HP will also maintain Fiorina's home security system for a year.

## Oracle User Groups Plan Joint Meeting

The Oracle Applications User Group and the Global International Users Group, an independent association of PeopleSoft and J.D. Edwards users, will hold a joint conference this spring.

The event, slated for June 13-18 in Grapevine, Texas, is part of an effort to boost the identity of both user groups within the Oracle community.

## BEA Systems Buys Swedish Vendor

BEA Systems Inc. has acquired Sweden-based Incomm Software, a privately held maker of infrastructure software for the telecommunications industry. Terms of the agreement weren't disclosed. BEA's 80th acquisition in two years is designed to enhance the company's place in the telecommunications industry by augmenting the BEA WebLogic Service Delivery Platform.

## HP Brings Out Opteron Blades

Advanced Micro Devices Inc.'s Opteron processor got a vote of confidence when HP unveiled its first blade servers based on the 64-bit processor. The two systems are the first Opteron blades brought out by a major vendor. The ProLiant systems are priced from \$2,900 and \$3,400 and will ship next month.

## Users Hope Telecom Mergers Provide Stability, Simplicity

Verizon, MCI make latest deal; network managers worry about transition issues

**BY MATT HAMBLEN**  
NETWORK MANAGERS SOMEWHAT warily welcomed Verizon Communications Inc.'s agreement last week to buy MCI Inc., the third major merger announced in the telecommunications industry in recent weeks.

"I think consolidation is good, and it will create stability in the telecom environment," said Paul Lowmewirth, vice president of telecommunications at Viewpoint Archive Services LLC's operations facility in Houston. "If the merger transitions go right, customers will receive good service."

But that's a big "if" for many businesses, according to Lowmewirth and several of the 11 other network managers interviewed by Computerworld last week. They voiced concerns similar to the ones raised earlier this month after SBC Communications Inc. announced that it had agreed to buy AT&T Corp. [QuickLink 3337].

"Absolutely, we're worried

about changes to our carrier account teams and quality of network service slipping in the transitional period," said Lowmewirth.

"Verizon is sort of a gunslinger taking the hill from the MCI world, and there will be plenty of cultural issues between the two," he added.

Meanwhile, Qwest Communications International Inc. late last week said it plans to renew its bid for MCI, indicating that this takeover saga may not be over. An earlier Qwest bid of \$23 a share was rejected in favor of the Verizon offer.

Until any mergers are approved, IT managers may see "a

12- to 18-month shutdown period" on information about new service offerings, said Walt Magnusson, telecommunications director at Texas A&M University in College Station.

"It's hard to figure out what your own network strategy will be if you can't get reasonable expectations from the carriers," Magnusson said. But Fred Griske, assistant vice president of telecommunications at The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Co. in North Worth, Texas, said it will "simply life" to have the carriers combined, especially when he negotiates new contracts.

## Service to Improve?

"Enterprises will be better served in the long run," agreed Bob Pojman, senior vice president of technology and network services at Biays Information Solutions.

The Houston-based unit of

The Biays Group Inc. provides hosted financial applications to more than 250 banks and has network services contracts worth a total of about \$25 million annually with five carriers.

Combining carriers will mean fewer handoffs between different networks, reducing complexity and providing users with "more ubiquitous pricing," Pojman said.

He added that over the past

two years, Biays has built automated systems for reporting network problems and initiating new services. Pojman said that should protect it against merger-related workforce reductions by the carriers.

□ 52984

## TELECOM ALTERNATIVES

Some network managers at midsize companies said switching to smaller carriers was the right option for them:

QuickLink 52989  
www.computerworld.com

## NEW PRODUCT

## HP Returns to Routers, Aims at Branch Offices

ProCurve Secure Router 7000d series  
Hewlett-Packard Co.

**■ PRODUCT SUMMARY:** HP's ProCurve networking unit today will expand beyond the switch and wireless LAN access point markets by adding a pair of branch-office routers. The 7000d has two slots for WAN interface cards, and supports up to four T1 connections. The 7000d has two standard slots and one wide slot for WAN cards and can handle up to 32 T1 connections. The routers each have a compact built-in port to allow easy transition of configuration and images files from flash memory. HP said it added that both machines come with lifetime warranties.

**■ USER EXPERIENCE:** Eli Grove, Universal School District in Sacramento, Calif., is testing the 7000d and has ordered four that will be used in elementary schools for WAN connections, said Dan Clinton, network administrator for the 60,000-student district. In all, the district may order 40 of the routers, one for each of its elementary schools, which are connected to the school system's metropolitan-area network via T1 lines. The HP gear will replace routers from Nortel Networks Ltd., Clinton said, adding that Nortel's current products are too expensive. The school district also evaluated routers from Cisco Systems Inc. but found them

too pricey as well. "Plus, you get a lifetime warranty from HP, and the warranties from Cisco are killing us," costing up to 25% of a device's purchase price annually, Clinton said. Eli Grove has used HP's switches and other products in the LAN that supports its central administration for four years.

Clinton praised the company's technology and customer service, but he said he hopes that the ProCurve division will get a development boost following the merger's ouster of Carly Fiorina as HP's CEO. "I see it as a positive move that she's going," he said.

**■ ANALYST AGREEMENT:** — The announcement of the 7000d series signals HP's re-entry into the router market, which it exited in the late 1990s, said Nick Lipkin, an analyst at Lopez Consulting in Hingham, Mass.

Lipkin said that the new routers are priced at about half the list price of comparable devices from Cisco and that HP's lifetime warranty will be "huge" in terms of attracting customer attention.

**■ OTHER VENDORS IN THIS MARKET:** Cisco, Nortel and numerous smaller companies.

**■ PRICE:** The 7000d has a list price of \$7,995. HP didn't disclose the cost of the 700d.

**■ AVAILABILITY:** The routers are due to ship in April. □ 52987

— Matt Hamblen



Walt Magnusson, telecommunications director at Texas A&M University in College Station.

**It's hard to figure out what your own network strategy will be if you can't get reasonable expectations from the carriers.**

WALT MAGNUSSEN  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR,  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY



*"When we calculated the total cost of ownership for Red Hat Linux using a 10-year Net Present Value Model, we were surprised at how much higher it was than for Windows."*

—J.E. Henry, CIO,  
Regal Entertainment Group

Regal Entertainment Group, the largest movie theater operator in the U.S., ran its POS concession and ticket terminals on Red Hat Linux. However, they saw that it lacked the vendor support and remote management tools they needed to support their strategic plans. After an in-depth comparison, Regal found that Windows Embedded would deliver a lower TCO, improved security, and fewer risks. "With Windows, we get an integrated, easily managed platform that can extend from the data center to our POS devices," says Cliff DeYoung, CTO at Regal.

To get the full case study, other case studies, or third-party findings, go to [microsoft.com/getthefacts](http://microsoft.com/getthefacts)





## GLOBAL

## Senior Legislator Urges Privacy Rights in Japan

TOKYO

**A**N INFLUENTIAL Japanese politician earlier this month called for the right to information privacy to be added to the country's constitution. The collection, storage, and transfer of personal information should be banned unless the person consents to the activity or there's a valid legal exception, said Yukio Hatoyama, a member of Japan's House of Representatives and former leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan.

People should have the right to know what information about them has been gathered and how it's being used, Hatoyama said in a speech about updating Japan's 1947 constitution.

Japanese citizens tend to be less concerned about personal data collection than citizens in Western countries. For example, many Japanese citizens voluntarily provide details about their households to the local koban, or neighborhood police office. But concerns about privacy

## An International IT News Digest

are starting to emerge because of a recent rash of highly publicized information leaks at major Japanese companies, some of which exposed data about millions of people.

■ MARTYN WILLIAMS, IDG NEWS SERVICE

## EU Regulators Agree To Help VoIP Flourish

BRUSSELS

**T**ELECOMMUNICATIONS authorities in 25 European Union countries have agreed to eliminate regulations that hamper adoption of voice-over-IP services in Europe and make it hard for VoIP providers to compete against traditional phone companies.

In a statement issued Feb. 11, the European Regulators Group said pro-competition policies that let VoIP flourish should be applied consistently

across the 25 EU member nations. The issues that the regulators plan to address include number allocation. For example, in Germany, VoIP service providers are given telephone numbers starting with the 032 prefix, regardless of where the ser-

vice is based, but customers often prefer local numbers.

The statement says that "numbering plans should be technologically neutral" and that the same ranges of telephone numbers should be made available for both traditional voice and VoIP services.

■ SIMON TAYLOR, IDG NEWS SERVICE

## T-Mobile Phone Aimed At Corporate Buyers

CANNES, FRANCE

**T**MOBILE INTERNATIONAL AG last week announced a smart phone that is based on the Windows

Mobile operating system and includes cellular and Wi-Fi capabilities for corporate users. Bonn, Germany-based T-Mobile made the announcement at the JGSM World Congress here.

The MDA IV model, due to be available in the second half of this year, offers wireless Internet connectivity via three technologies so it can be used in Europe, Asia and North America. The smart phone has business-oriented features, such as a keyboard for typing e-mail, a full Microsoft Office software suite and interfaces for synchronizing data with a PC. The screen can be turned around so the device becomes a minilaptop. T-Mobile said. ■ 02670

■ JOHN BLAU, IDG NEWS SERVICE

Compiled by Mitch Betts.

## Briefly Noted

**MyPhone** NPL Ltd., an IT and hardware process outsourcing company in Bangalore, India, last week agreed to acquire Princeton Consulting Ltd., a Strong, England-based provider of CRM systems and services, for \$27.9 million (\$14.5 million U.S.).

■ JOHN RESEND, IDG NEWS SERVICE

**IBM** announced last week that it plans to open more than a dozen so-called Innovation Centers in China, Brazil and Russia over the next three months to promote the use of Linux with IBM's middlewares and hardware. The facilities will provide members and technical assistance to help build software developers and integrators build and deploy Linux-based systems, IBM said.

**ET Group PLC** in London has acquired Arden Networks Inc. to protect its entire corporate network in the U.K. from viruses and cyber-thefts, the Langhams, Mass.-based security company announced last week.

## Dell Stands by Intel on CPUs, Exec Says

BY CRAIG STRONAM

**Jeff Clarke** is responsible for the development and marketing of Dell Inc.'s enterprise products, including its servers, workstations, storage devices and network equipment. Clarke, one of three senior vice presidents who manage the different segments of Dell's product group, spoke with Computerworld last week about issues such as the company's continuing reliance on Intel Corp.'s chips over Advanced Micro Devices Inc.'s Opteron processor.

How much of Dell's revenue comes from the enterprise products, and where do you expect that to go in the future? Enterprise is slightly north of 20% of our revenue. We're going to continue to grow it ahead of the company's average growth,

but we don't project it out at any point in time.

What's your response to the view that Dell isn't a big technology innovator? Everybody's entitled to their opinion. Our view of the world is, "Look at these technologies. How can we bundle them together?"

We were one of the first companies to put lithium-ion batteries in a system. Did we invent lithium-ion technology? No. Did we think of packaging it in a system? Yes. That's our approach to innovation, and our customers have to vote with their wallets.

Why are you still holding off on using Opteron chips in servers? Our

product plans are Intel-based, and that's what we're shipping today. We're always evaluating new technologies in our labs, and there are points in time where one part is faster than

another one. The question is whether that advantage is going to be sustained over time.

What about Intel's Itanium chip vs. its 32-bit x86 processors with 64-bit capabilities? We're very,

very strong proponents of the 32-bit chips with 64-bit extensions. We do have an Itanium-based system, because customers have asked for one. But the vast majority of our products are based on the 32-bit chips, and they will continue to be used in the vast majority of our products.

We reported last month that server shipments were being delayed by shortages of some disk drives, but Dell said it wasn't being affected by the shortages [Quint: Is 52223].

We're not seeing any shortages. We know how to run our business. We have a great understanding of supply and demand, perhaps in advance of our suppliers.

Have you been able to hold the line on pricing, despite the short supply? We did not raise prices, if that was your question.

Does Linux account for a big portion of your overall server shipments? It's significant. Linux is on about 15% of the servers that ship from our factory, and it has about a 23% or 24% share (on our machines) worldwide, if you count operating systems that are installed by customers.

What about Linux on the desktop? We factory-install it on all of our workstations. At the PC level, we don't see a strong demand for it.

What are you doing to try to take advantage of HP's ouster of Carly Fiorina as its CEO? We're focusing on our customers and trying to drive the best value to them. Our strategy remains very consistent.

How do you see HP now? They're a strong competitor.

Less strong than they were before? Sorry. You're not going to get the kind of answer you want from me on that. ■ 02603

## READ MORE ONLINE

Go to our Web site for an extended version of the interview:

Quint: Jan 02664  
www.computerworld.com




Q&amp;A

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## E-health

various federal agencies to analyze 500 industry responses to a request for information (RFI) on ideas for bolstering the use of EHRs. Brailer's office will release a set of guidelines for using EHRs and for building interoperability in the coming months, he added.

The RFI responses suggested that the government take a regional approach to fostering the use of EHRs and share in the cost of the technology, Brailer said. In addition, interoperability among various health care providers was a major theme of the responses.

"If interoperability is not... built into EHRs, a generation of investment will be lost," Brailer said. Organizations purchasing EHR technology today are buying proprietary software that isn't interoperable with products from other vendors, he added.

### Seeking a Standard

A director of IT applications at a large U.S.-based health system who asked not to be identified said the government needs to step up and provide a nationwide standard.

"The government needs to take the lead, [and] the vendors will follow," he said. "This should be an agreed-upon data set of what we will be sharing with each other."

Many organizations today are limited to interoperating only with health care providers that use the same EHR vendor.

The Cleveland Clinic Foundation plans to house all of the patient records for its 12 hospitals in three regional central electronic repositories that doctors can access, said Albert Edwards Jr., director of the Office of Clinical Integration and Interfaces at the Cleveland Clinic.

Because the health care provider uses clinical care software developed by Epic Systems Corp. in Madison, Wis., Davis said, "it's not a strong leap to then hit another

hospital that is using Epic and tap into their [EHRs], and now I can expand out to other regional hospitals."

At the HIMSS conference, Brailer noted that only the largest physician practices and hospitals are adopting EHR technology. Although more than half of group practices with more than 50 physicians have deployed EHR technology, only 13% of solo practices are using it, he said.

(Continued from page 1)

## Certifications

"Knowing someone has at least studied the concepts and has taken the steps to obtain the certifications gives that person a step up over someone who hasn't," said Garrow, who added that he would like Mohegan Sun's five IT project managers to become certified. "If we're ever going to get good at project management, we've got to have a pool of resources who can at least address the fundamentals of this type of work."

Garrow's thirst for certified project managers mirrors the kind of resurgence that IT certifications have been experiencing over the past six months. After the recession of the early 2000s and the resulting decline in IT spending, overall demand for some IT certifications began to soften.

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### BY THE NUMBERS

CompTIA Linux certifications	vs. 2003
CompTIA has issued roughly	since the program was launched in December 2002

held to ransom by people with certifications, and the value proposition dropped," said Martin Bean, chief operating officer at New Horizons Computer Learning Centers Inc., a computer training company in Anaheim, Calif.

### Uptick in Demand

But Bean has seen demand for certification courses pick up over the past 12 months, particularly in disciplines such as information security and project management.

"We're weathering our first dip that the certification industry has seen, and we think it's coming back," said Brian McCarthy, chief operating officer at The Computing Technology Industry Association Inc. (CompTIA), an Oakbrook Terrace, Ill.-based trade group that has certified nearly 750,000 IT professionals.

A case in point: 2004 demand for CompTIA's Security+ certification was 28% to 30% higher than expected, and demand for its Linux+ and Project+ certifications also remains strong, McCarthy said.

Now that demand for certification is picking up strongly, CompTIA is looking to add

"This is a large gap," Brailer said. "We have an obligation to level the playing field. We need a more direct or visible incentive."

Revolving incentives for using the technology is a top priority for many health care IT executives who are striving to incorporate EHR technology into their organizations' IT infrastructures.

Baylor Health Care System in Dallas has embarked on a

\$109 million clinical IT transformation that will span the next five years and include a move to EHRs, said James McPhail, the health care provider's vice president of enterprise services.

"We're hoping there will be some reimbursement relief from the government to promote the use of electronic medical records," he said. Edward Zareck, a solo practicing obstetrician in

Houston, said he can't afford to invest in the EHR systems that vendors sell to larger practices. Since manual data entry for government programs like Medicare would be eliminated by physicians using EHRs, the government should offer incentives for using the technology, he suggested.

"With incentives, maybe I would be able to do it," Zareck added. **■ 52710**

certification classes for radio frequency identification and voice over IP, McCarthy said he isn't sure when those courses might be introduced.

Sean Jameson, chief information technology officer at New York University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies, said he believes certification "elevates [a] person in the rankings if they have been awarded or vetted by a particular program or body that they can do what they say they can do." Jameson is currently looking to fill a J2EE Web developer position, "and it would be a huge plus [for a candidate] to have a certification," he said.

Not all CIOs are adamant about hiring people with technical certifications. Hank Zupnick, CIO at GE Real Estate in Stamford, Conn., said that al-

though he does seek people with critical project management skills, experience carries more weight with him than certifications.

"What I look for more than certification is a track record of success and an understanding, commensurate with position level, of the challenges to bringing a project in on budget, on time and on quality," said Zupnick.

"Certifications really aren't a big issue for me," added David Dart, managing director and CIO at New York-based HWB America Inc., a division of banking and financial services firm HWB Group.

Dart said his data security director recently picked up an information security certification, but that was based on a personal preference. **■ 52666**

## Helping CIOs Certify ROI

Alinean LLC and IDC last week jointly introduced a certification course aimed at helping IT executives measure the business value of existing and proposed IT projects.

The ValueExpert IT Value-Chain Management Certification course is designed to help CIOs and other IT executives determine when, whether and how much to spend on IT initiatives based on analyses of return on investment and total cost of ownership.

Bill Johnston, president of Orlando-based Alinean, said 95% of Alinean and IDC clients do some form of ad hoc ROI

analyses, often using spreadsheets, when they purchase technology. And although some IT organizations use ROI tools or have set up metrics to analyze technology investments, IT managers often lack the training needed to conduct thorough ROI or TCO analyses, he said. Alinean and Framingham, Mass.-based IDC, a provider of IT market research services, plan to offer the first certification course in Orlando on Feb. 24 and March 31, followed by courses in New York and Boston in May and June, respectively.

— Thomas Hoffman



Continued from page 1

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Continued from page 1

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BY THE NUMBERS

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Now that demand for certification is picking up strength, CompTIA is looking to add

certification classes for radio frequency identification and voice over IP. McCarthy said he isn't sure when those courses might be introduced.

Sean Jameson, chief information technology officer at New York University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies, said he believes certification "elevates [a person in the rankings if they have been awarded or vetted by a particular program or body that they can do what they say they can do." Jameson is currently looking to fill a J2EE Web developer position, "and it would be a huge plus [for a candidate] to have a certification," he said.

Not all CIOs are adamant about hiring people with technical certifications. Hank Zupnick, CIO at GE Real Estate in Stamford, Conn., said that al-

though he does seek people with critical project management skills, experience carries more weight with him than certifications.

"What I look for more than certification is a track record of success and an understanding, commensurate with position level, of the challenges to bringing a project in on budget, on time and on quality," said Zupnick.

"Certifications really aren't a big issue for me," added David Dart, managing director and CIO at New York-based FVB America Inc., a division of banking and financial services firm FVB Group.

Dart said his data security director recently picked up an information security certification, but that was based on a personal preference. **■** 52666

## Helping CIOs Certify ROI

Altheen LLC and IDC last week jointly introduced a certification course aimed at helping IT executives measure the business value of existing and proposed IT projects.

The ValueExpert IT Value-Chain Management Certification course is designed to help CIOs and other IT executives determine when, whether and how much to spend on IT initiatives based on analysis of return on investment and total cost of ownership.

Bill Johnston, president of Orlando-based Altheen, said 90% of Altheen and IDC clients do some form of ad hoc ROI

analysis, often using spreadsheets, when they purchase technology. And although some IT organizations use ROI tools or have set up metrics to analyze technology investments, IT managers often lack the training needed to conduct thorough ROI or TCO analysis, he said.

Altheen and Framingham, Mass.-based IDC, a provider of IT market research services, plan to offer the first certification courses in Orlando on Feb. 24 and March 31, followed by courses in New York and Boston in May and June, respectively.

—Thomas Hoffman



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## Health Care CIO Runs 'Internal' RFID Test

BY HEATHER HAVENSTEIN

John Halamka, CIO at both CareGroup Inc. and Harvard Medical School, is testing radio frequency identification technology — on himself.

An RFID chip that is the size of two grains of rice and encased in a glass container was implanted in the back of Halamka's right arm, near the elbow, just before Christmas. Halamka said this month that when the chip is scanned by an RFID reader, an identifying number directs physicians to his medical records, which are stored electronically at CareGroup's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

The chip was inserted with a needle in a procedure that took about five minutes. Halamka, 42, said he's testing the

technology for its potential to help health care workers get critical medical information about unresponsive patients.

For example, Halamka noted that he is an avid mountaineer and ice climber.

"If I fall and I'm not responsive, wouldn't it be extraordinarily helpful for the people who rescue me to know who I am and my medical history?" Halamka, who has a medical degree and works as an emergency-room doctor at Beth Israel, said he isn't advocating that people get injected with RFID chips. But he added that he decided to try the technology himself partly so he could describe the experience to patients who want to undergo the procedure.

Halamka is confident that the implanted RFID chip, which was designed to last 100 years, doesn't raise data privacy concerns, because it contains no medical records — only the identifier that points to his records. "There is no way just from reading my tag for a merchant to

know who I am," he said. Halamka's chip was made by VeriChip Corp. in Delray Beach, Fla., and was cleared by

the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for medical use in October. Roger Kay, an analyst at IDC

in Framingham, Mass., said the needed technology infrastructure — mainly scanners — is not installed widely enough to support the use of RFID tags in a large number of patients.

But Kay said the idea is be-

coming feasible from a cost standpoint. "The cost of the individual chips is coming way down, to the point where it becomes practical to have chips on individual items, including people," he said. **52954**

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DON TENNANT

# Masters of Frustration

**W**HEN I SPEAK at any length with IT executives, I ask them to identify their biggest frustration in aligning business and IT—the task that is, after all, their raison d'être. The most frequent response I hear is education. Universities, they moan, are failing to graduate students who have both the business and IT management skills that companies desperately need.

It seems that many universities have heard their lament, because schools are finally beginning to do something about it. The cause is being championed by farsighted educators like Louis Lataif, dean of Boston University's School of Management.

Lataif is passionate about BU's role as an enabler of business-IT alignment, and specifically about the School of Management's contribution: a dual-degree graduate program called the MS-MBA. Those who enter the intensive, 23-month program earn both an MBA and a master of science in information systems. According to Lataif, combining the MBA and MSIS programs was a no-brainer.

"The next generation of CEOs is coming from IT, not from finance," he says. "What business problem do you know that isn't being solved by technology?"

BU's MS-MBA program began in 2001 and will yield its third class of graduates in May. The original idea, Lataif says, was for the MS-MBA to replace the MBA at BU within five years. "But too many oxen were being gored," he says, referring to the discomfort being felt among stakeholders in the status quo. For now, MS-MBAs constitute roughly half of BU's graduating MBAs, and Lataif is pragmatic about the future. "Let the market vote," he says.

I've spoken with a couple of BU's MS-MBA students, and they've cer-

tainly cast their ballots.

"I came in more as a doubter. I was questioning whether it would set you up to be the tech guy in your group who would always be the go-to guy for the grant projects," says 27-year-old Calder Cruikshank, a former financial analyst at Johnson & Johnson who will graduate from the program in May. But oow

be's convinced that he made the right move and that others who don't follow suit are missing a golden opportunity. "You'll never have time to get as deep as you do in this program during the rest of your career," Cruikshank says.

Mark Michaud, who will also graduate in May, says he began the pro-

gram expecting to go into product marketing. But Michaud now wants to pursue an "IT relationship role" because he wants to be "at the center of aligning business strategy with IT objectives and capabilities."

That's music to the ears of corporate recruiters like Lenny Spitz, a recruiting manager at BearingPoint who has already hired six BU MS-MBA graduates and wants to hire seven to 10 more this year for the consultancy's emerging middle markets practice. "The program is a perfect match for what we want to do," Spitz says. "My goal is to expand this throughout the rest of BearingPoint."

What's especially encouraging is that these intensive dual-degree programs that integrate an MBA with an MS degree in an IT-related discipline are being offered by a growing number of universities. The University of Delaware, the University of Michigan, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of San Diego, Creighton University and Loyola University are among them.

In fact, I'd venture to say we have a trend going here. So you might just be able to master that perennial frustration ooo and for all. **Q 52643**

*Don Tennant*



VIRGINIA ROBBINS

# Listen to Your Small Irritations

**L**OAN VOLUME was up 147%, IT costs were down 1%, staffing levels were stable, and we were moving forward with two exciting new projects.

But I still had a problem. I was frustrated by the frequency with which our call center opened late because of delays in early-morning processing. (The irony is that if the early-morning team hadn't been so good, I'd probably have no documentation on the numerous delays that they were facing.)

I discussed this with a colleague, and in summary, this is what he suggested:

1. **Keep a diary for two weeks.** Write down everything that irritates or frustrates you. Use these minor annoyances as signals of small problems.

2. **At the end of two weeks, review each situation** that came up and place it into one of three categories: people, processes or technology. For those situations that are people issues, determine which of these three questions apply: Do you

have good people doing the wrong things some of the time? Or do you have one person doing the wrong thing most of the time? Or is everyone just doing things wrong? Write down your answers.

For those situations that are process-based, ask yourself: What would my best person do? Would he have followed the process? Or would even he have done something else?

As for items that land in the technology category, hold them aside until you've resolved the people and process issues.

3. **Add up the number of situations in each category.** If the largest number is in the process category, then it's time to review your implementation and audit plans. If people dominates the list, begin by taking a closer look at the people involved. If, as you think through



various situations, you keep coming back to the same person, it's time to talk to HR. If there are a large number of people on your list, then maybe it's time to listen to HR. They could have some very helpful advice.

**4. Formulate a plan of action for one item on your list.** Make validation your first step by checking with your peers, HR and perhaps your boss.

I applied this technique to my problem in the call center. My plan of action included asking people why they thought we had opening delays. What I found out is that not everyone shared my belief. Some of the staff believed that the early-morning delays weren't that material. So, knowing that our bonuses are built around costs, I asked HR if I could publish a per-minute cost for early-morning operations.

Once all the staff members became aware of the costs, it became clear to them that the delays could have a material effect on their bonuses. I also had a long-standing employee issue that needed to be dealt with. After publishing the numbers and resolving the staffing issue, groups that were indirectly contributing to the delays became more interested in reducing the delays, and they did so.

By paying attention to how I was reacting in small ways, by linking feelings and data, I was able to see problems I hadn't seen before and reduce my frustrations, while helping the business become even more efficient. **Q 52619**

MICHAEL  
GARTENBERG

## Rules for The Road

USING TECHNOLOGY on the road has changed a lot over the years. In times gone by, I traveled with a bag loaded with the necessities of the day, such as a pair of wire strippers, so I could rewrite the hotel phone in order to get a line out, and a set of acoustic couplers, so I could actually get online if there was no modular phone. I was grateful if it all worked somehow. Today, I get grumpy if there's no high-speed access, and frankly, I prefer a good Wi-Fi signal so I'm not tethered to a desk that's not ergonomically suitable.

Life on the road has indeed gotten a lot better, but it's also more imperative

these days to be able to keep in touch. There are a few strategies and tools that can keep your life on the road (or the lives of those you support) better and keep you (and them) connected.

When I travel, I think redundant systems. Back at the office, you don't have just one server and a single method of access, do you? You shouldn't work that way on the road, either. That's why I like to make sure that I have at least two ways of getting online, so when I get to the hotel and discover that its broadband is down and dial-up is flaky, I can still get by my e-mail. Actually, I prefer to have at least two backup systems, so I carry a dedicated e-mail device that can also make phone calls and a cell phone that can download e-mail in a pinch.

I've also learned to bring everything I need but nothing more. I've seen



three of them make phone calls, four of them can do e-mail, two of them can take pictures, and three of them can play back media and entertainment. One of the hassles of schlepping

technology is the need to recharge. Hotels just aren't designed for this. I've been in places where I had devices hanging off the desk, lying under the bed and dangling in the bathroom. Fortunately, there's a solution to this problem. Most cell phones, PDAs, e-mail devices and the like can be charged through the USB ports on your computer. Invest in some USB-powered cables and leave the heavy power adapters at home. The best ones have an autoreset feature that keeps them nice and neat in your bag until you need them. You'll save a lot of room in your bag, and you'll be less likely to leave a charger or device in your hotel room.

Staying in touch isn't a luxury these days; it's a necessity. A little planning and packing can ensure that you stay connected without having to bring along your help desk. **Q 52577**

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## READERS' LETTERS

### Pols May Be Stooges, but China's No Joke

I READ with interest Don Tennant's editorial of Feb. 7 titled "The Three Stooges" (QuickLink 52390). Lord knows I have no confidence in the Congress making any sort of informed decision on technical issues, and I consider the concern about military and national security aspects of Lenovo Group's purchase to be misplaced, or at least not so serious as to require congressional action. But the article seems to be trying to convey the impression that there's absolutely nothing to worry about, and I don't think that's realistic either.

My concern isn't with national security, but rather with technical hardware and especially software intellectual property. U.S. companies seem to think they can deal with the Chinese government and Chinese corporations (effectively, the same thing) on the same basis they deal with the U.S. companies—that contracts are binding and that agreements protecting intellectual property, trade secrets, etc. will be honored.

Experience is being painfully gained—too slowly—to disabuse them of that belief. There is no perceived disadvantage to violating such agreements as soon as it is of

benefit to either China itself or the Chinese corporate entity involved, and nothing will be done by the current administration to invoke WTO or other sanctions to protect such violations.

I wouldn't let any process, procedure or sensitive information that I valued ever be transferred to a Chinese corporation. I can only hope that the executive management of U.S. companies will begin to carefully examine and consider any agreements that release such information to "partners" in China.

David M. Binst  
President, DMINET  
Consulting Inc., Chicago

**A** NEW Brother, you couldn't have stated the problem any more clearly. It's shocking that those in power are so ignorant of the facts. In addition, they seem to be acted by an even less informed and willing accomplice—the national media. Keep telling it as it really is.

Stephen W. Connors  
IT technical systems  
integrator, Indianapolis

**A** S ANOTHER former expatriate, I am greatly enjoying the column. However, Tennant makes too

much sense for politicians to pay attention. Remember, these are the same people who reduced your Social Security benefits while at the same time claiming that they never would do such a thing. Surely you don't expect either honesty or common sense out of these folks.

Andrew H. Olson  
Managing director,  
Team International Group,  
Gainesville, Fla.

### They Shoot Hard Drives, Don't They?

**F**OR MANY YEARS, my friends and I have "reformat" hard disk drives we intended to dispose of with a variety of hardware-based solutions. We found the most effective to be a Corb AS ACP handgun, a Pire-Delorme 40 handgun, a Corb AS-S (3.56mm) and an M1 Garand (7.62mm). We experimented with shotgun loads, but they failed to penetrate the platters. The handgun and rifle rounds penetrated completely, leaving a sizable warped area and barr across the platters. So "kill Your Data" (QuickLink 52155) isn't that much of an innovation.

John Libartine  
Boston

### E-voting's Problem

**E**LECTRONIC VOTING, being unverifiable, is not suitable for democracy (Readers' Letters, QuickLink 52344). In traditional elections, we keep and count the vote itself (the ballot). So traditional election results are verifiable. In electronic elections, we store and count a record of the vote. The vote itself cannot be verified, and thus we must passively accept any result we are given. Since the object of elections is giving that power to the rule makers, we need elections to be verifiable. I say e-voting is not only a technical problem but a social one.

Emmanuel Lombardi  
Unix system manager,  
Bracciano, Italy

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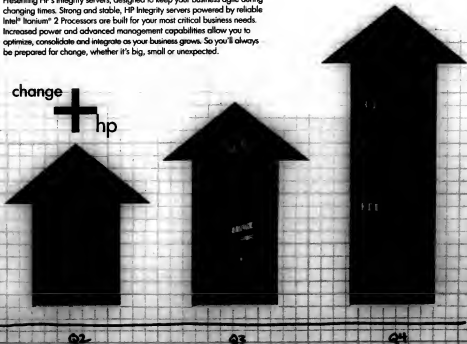
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**E-meeting systems have evolved into more than ways to save time and money on travel. We see how three companies are finding that they can track and shape projects as they produce more-focused meetings.**



# Meet Me IN CYBERSPACE

**V**IRTUAL MEETINGS conducted over the Internet were once viewed as little more than a clumsy stopgap when time or the company travel budget made in-person meetings impossible. But improved technology that streamlines workflow, facilitates knowledge management and allows corporations to do more in less time and at a lower cost has transformed e-meetings into one of the best choices for many kinds of group communication, according to users.

Features of e-meeting software can include integrated audio- and video-conferencing, application sharing with markup capabilities, real-time feedback, whiteboards, instant surveys and text chat. In addition, some technologies automatically record meetings for edit-

ing and playback and store recordings and materials such as agendas, minutes and presentations for easy retrieval.

"We're just now seeing the point where e-meetings are getting on the mainstream radar — where it has become the norm for facilitating conversations or conferencing. Instead of the exception," says Peter O'Kelly, an analyst at Burton Group in Midvale, Utah.

And as the software and interfaces have become more sophisticated, it has become easier for people to start using tools effectively, O'Kelly says.

But there are some things a company should look out for when moving to virtual meetings, says Eli Mima, a Vancouver, British Columbia-based management consultant. Virtual meetings work better in small groups, and it's more difficult to build trust and team

cohesion when people can't see or hear one another, he says. E-meetings also reduce flexibility, making some interactive discussion techniques, like breaking into smaller groups, almost impossible.

To evaluate how the benefits and disadvantages of virtual meetings stack up in real business situations, Computerworld took a look at how three companies are using virtual meeting software.

## **Wyndham International: Beyond Training**

Dallas-based Wyndham International Inc. initially turned to Centra Software Inc.'s real-time online collaboration tool to facilitate employee training in its new property management system.

The hotel chain soon decided it could save time and money using Centra's e-meeting application as well.

Since Wyndham started using Lexington, Mass.-based Centra's software four years ago, it has saved more than \$1 million in travel-related and telecommunications expenses, says Mark Eggers, manager of online learning at the company.

"We use it for weekly and monthly conference calls, and because it's

voice over IP, we save about \$10,000 to \$15,000 a month on our telephone bill," Eggers says.

Centra's software enables application sharing, and it displays graphics, PowerPoint slides and spreadsheets. "We can show the information to people rather than just talking about it







on the phone," says Eggers.

Centra's e-meeting tool also brings back some of the etiquette to the process because people have to click on an icon if they want to speak, rather than cutting a colleague off while participating in a teleconference, Eggers says.

Centra's users can initiate an e-meeting by clicking on the Centra shortcut in their Windows task-bar notification area or right from their desktop, says John Walsh, senior vice president of engineering and operations. Participants can then attend a scheduled event by clicking on a link in their e-mail, calendar or instant message invitation, he says.

"Centra even allows outside vendors to participate in a Wyndham meeting," Eggers says. "We are on the Internet with the system, and they just come out to our system and get the client software on their machines. It takes a few minutes, and they're ready to go."

And the more people use it, the more they love it, Eggers says.

"Centra has done a very nice job of capturing a familiar user model," O'Kelly says. "So if I'm used to facilitating meetings with groups of people, I find familiar concepts when using a tool like Centra — like there's a podium, and there might be a seating chart, and people can raise their hands."

### Bausch & Lomb: Eye to Productivity

Bausch & Lomb Inc. chose Documentum Inc.'s eRoom collaboration tool to bring together globally dispersed teams to develop new products, says Paul Loda, director of new product development at the Rochester, N.Y.-based eye care company. A maker of contact management software, Documentum is a subsidiary of Hopkinton, Mass.-based EMC Corp.

"Before eRoom, people were flying

all over the place to try and get some face time," Loda says.

Before the company purchased several hundred seats of eRoom in 2000, Bausch & Lomb's product developers would also waste time and money exchanging information via fax and e-mail, he says. In addition, numerous team and management meetings were often needed for product updates and approvals, he says.

Now all the product information is contained within eRoom, and each team member is given immediate access to every type of document and information in a common workspace on the Web, he says. Project leaders and team members communicate during the e-meetings via audio conference calls, Loda says.

On one project alone, Bausch & Lomb saved \$30,000 on travel costs, while the total investment in eRoom — \$10,000 for a server license and 15 licenses at \$300 each — was under \$20,000, he says.

"And just because of cuts in travel, people had more free work time to get more stuff done because they didn't have to sit in another meeting," Loda says. He adds, "I like the fact that everything is kept in one place and it's accessible anytime, anywhere, by anybody who you have given permission to get to it."

Real Time Services, the integrated component of eRoom's digital workplace, provides tools for real-time meetings, presentations and collaboration, according to Documentum. ITS works via a standard Web browser and doesn't require client installation for meeting attendees.

The service provides capabilities for group edits, whiteboard sessions, real-time discussions and one-to-many presentations. This enables distributed teams to work simultaneously on proj-



ects and to capture, index and reuse the collective output of each session, says Lance Shaw, director of product marketing at Documentum. In addition, ITS lets users share their desktops and allows participants to access applications on their remotely, he says.

Room members log into a session with a name and password. ITS also gives nonmembers invited to eRoom access to meetings via a secure URL, Loda says.

### Steelcase Inc.: Global Teamwork

Office furniture company Steelcase Inc. in Grand Rapids, Mich., uses Groove Networks Inc.'s desktop collaboration software, Groove Virtual Office, to connect virtual teams with members in locations around the world, says Florent Burion, international CRM team leader at Steelcase. But the software provides more than a link, he says.

"Groove's meetings tool really helps

us structure the meeting process — and makes sure everybody in a team is using that process in a simple but disciplined fashion," Burion says.

And it has cut down on face-to-face meetings, he says.

"We have some Web development teams with very tight time frames, including the team in charge of renovating our corporate Web site," Burion says. "The team leader wanted to get the whole team up to speed quickly without having to have lots of team-building or lots of face-to-face meetings."

In addition, Burion estimates that Steelcase has been able to save 20% to 40% on travel time, though Steelcase hasn't tracked exact figures on time saved or costs cut.

Virtual Office lets teams contextualize share files, manage projects and coordinate business processes by allowing them to do things like mark up documents and show PowerPoint presentations within secure workspaces synchronized across all team members' PCs, says Michael Helfrich, Groove's vice president of product management.

The software's decentralized architecture enables teams to work online, off-line and across firewalls — in real time and independently — while freeing IT departments from costly server and network infrastructure requirements, Helfrich says. Groove's virtual meeting tool allows users to communicate via instant messaging, chat or voice-over-IP systems.

A meeting wizard takes users through the process of creating a meeting and inviting team members. Once a meeting is created, any participant can add agenda topics, create action items, attach files and record minutes from a tabbed interface.

Such features, available in Virtual Office and other e-meeting software systems, have gone a long way toward breaking down barriers to user acceptance, according to analysts.

"We have been using the meetings tool extensively, and everywhere it has been used, we have definitely noticed an increase in productivity and alignment of teams," Burion says. "In the Groove satisfaction survey we are conducting at the moment, the meetings tool is among the most-often-used tools and rated highly in terms of usefulness." ■ 02/02

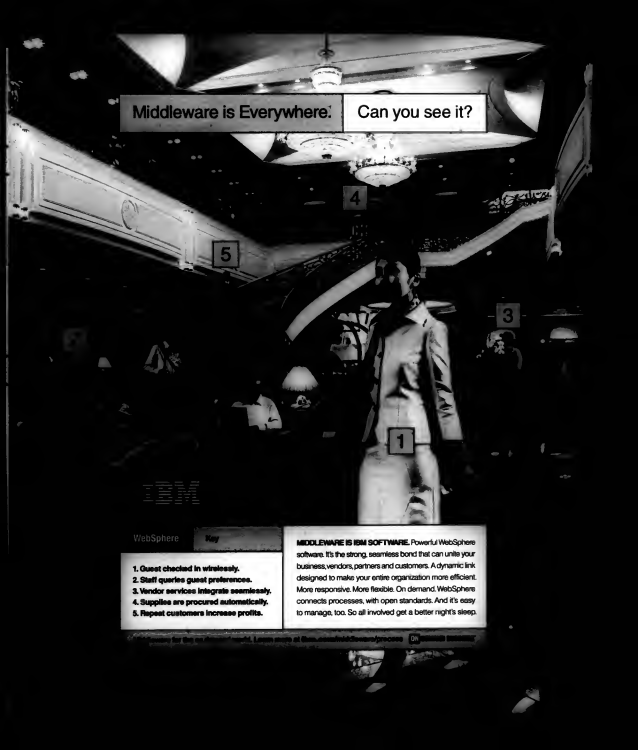


### WE-ENGINEERING THE USER

OUR TIME: Tony Peterson says software used for e-meetings can change the people who use it.

By David K. Lewis

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ON-DEMAND BUSINESS



## BRIEFS

**Xiotech Announces 3D Storage Array**

Xiotech Corp., in Eden Prairie, Minn., last week announced its Magnitude 3D 1000e, an entry-level version of its Magnitude 3D storage array. Capacity and performance in the array scale independently, allowing users to avoid overprovisioning, according to Xiotech. The Magnitude 3D 1000e has a maximum capacity of 19.2TB. Pricing starts at \$40,000.

**BugScan Integrated Into Logidex App**

LogiLibrary Inc., in Pittsburgh has completed the initial integration of its Logidex mapping and discovery engine play-in with the BugScan technology it acquired last fall. Logidex represents complex enterprise application development environments graphically, LogiLibrary says. BugScan's 3-D interface lets developers see each application at the business level and identify questionable security components. Integration of BugScan into Logidex-supported integrated development environments is scheduled to be completed by April. BugScan is still available as a stand-alone product.

**Artemis Upgrades IT Financial Suite**

Artemis International Solutions Corp., in Newport Beach, Calif., has launched a new version of Artemis 7, its IT financial management package. Version 6 includes performance-based budgeting capabilities that let IT organizations create budgets that are linked with corporate goals, Artemis says. The browser-based software is designed to help IT organizations measure the full costs of resources needed to support projects, and it can capture hardware and software life-cycle costs. Version 6 of Artemis 7 starts at \$50,000 for a proof-of-concept study; full implementations typically cost more than \$1 million.

ROBERT L. MITCHELL

# Municipal Wireless Madness

**WHAT WOULD YOUR BOSS SAY** if you proposed providing low-cost wireless broadband access to the public in your local industrial park? You'd probably be sent packing — unless



"diworsification."

A municipal IT department that moves from supporting its internal client base to selling low-cost broadband services to the public is clearly changing its mission. It's moving from an IT support role to selling a service and building and maintaining a wireless broadband infrastructure. It's moving from a bureaucratic model to a business model. And it's creating a quasi-monopoly by using tax dollars to fund a low-cost access scheme.

Even if a municipality succeeds, creating a price structure with a zero or below-market margin is likely to hamper a transition to competitive alternatives, leaving customers with a government utility that's likely to be less responsive than a private business. Would anyone really rather talk to city hall when his broadband connection fails? And those low prices won't help the city continually upgrade and rebuild its wireless infrastructure as technology leaps forward. If municipalities had done this five years ago, I'd wager that they'd still be using 2Mbit/sec. 802.11 technology.

Municipalities are jumping in now because offering wireless access on the cheap to the public is politically popular and looks easy. But surely there are reasons why private business hasn't developed such networks. The barriers to entry appear to be low, but what are they over the long term? Can a government utility justify a massive

investment in wireless infrastructure at a time when the technology is changing rapidly? The fast pace of those advances and market shifts going on in telecommunications today are swallowing up companies like AT&T whole. Can municipalities really do better? If you think the protected, regulated monopolies of the Baby Bells were slow to offer DSL in the late 1990s, what will municipalities do when it's time to change everything out?

Given local governments' desire to get involved, one would assume that there is some pressing social need that private enterprise has not met that justifies such an investment. In that case, governments traditionally offer market incentives such as tax breaks or regulations that encourage private companies to provide desired services.

For example, the Bell operating companies were given monopolies in exchange for providing universal access to telephone service, even for customers in the most remote areas. But some municipalities are forming public wireless broadband utilities to compete with private service providers in an effort to offer wireless access in city centers and urban neighborhoods where wired broadband access is already available.

City-funded wireless broadband networks continue to pop up with great fanfare precisely because they will serve large concentrations of voters. Such political moves sell well today, but when the fall bill comes due, the budget as will fall. These networks, if they survive, will spin off into private hands, where they should have started in the first place. In the end, the only sure winners in this whole affair will be the vendors that sell wireless networking equipment. **■ 52647**

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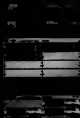




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Former CIO **Doug Lewis** tells how to put together an IT strategic plan that will make a difference, even if your company is strategy-challenged.



## THE IT STRATEGIC PLAN

"DOUG, WE NEED a strategic plan for IT." Over my career as a CIO in a number of Fortune 100 companies, I heard and dreaded those words many times. I knew they would launch a largely useless effort involving highly paid consultants and diversion of some of my best people. I knew the final product would be applauded by my management but never used to guide the actual deployment of my resources.

Think my experiences are unique? I'll bet you a very nice bottle of Merlot and a steak dinner that many corporate CIOs have the same stories to tell. So, what's wrong? If strategic planning is a hallmark of good management, why are so many strategic IT plans never enacted? More important, how do you, as the CIO, avoid wasting your resources developing a

strategies plan that's never enacted, or, even worse, is enacted and results in a disastrous waste of resources?

There is a right and a wrong way to approach strategy and IT planning. The right way is to follow this sequence: goals, strategies, tactics, execution. Here's how it works. Goals lead to strategies. Strategies lead to tactics. Tactics lead to execution. Simple, but effective!

**Goals are the major "whats" of the company's strategic plan.** Strategic goals must be finite, measurable and tangible. They must be more than five, since most companies simply don't have the management bandwidth to execute against more. They are seldom in a company's high-sounding mission statement. Instead, they are the heart and soul of senior executives' business plans, from the CFO on down. It's amazing how linking bonuses to very specific goals creates a laserlike focus among senior executives.

**Strategies are the top-level "hows" of the plan.** They tell how the people and financial resources of the company will be mobilized and directed to accomplish each of the strategic goals. By inference, they tell how those same resources won't be used. Typically, there will be one to three strategies for each goal.

**Tactics are the low-level "hows" of the plan.** They tell every person and department what their roles will be in implementing the strategies and how they support the company's goals. Creating these tactics forces senior and midlevel management into a constructive dialogue about the realities of resources. It forces a conversation about what will be done and, more important, what won't be done. For example, if a task doesn't support a tactic, it must be rejected.

Execution is simply carrying out the tactics. Good execution requires communication, project management, measurement, feedback and so on.

Here's an example from a former life:

#### GOAL

Become the lowest-cost producer of jet engines

#### STRATEGIES

- 1 Reduce the time from engine contract to certification from eight years to four years
- 2 Eliminate redundant engineering and manufacturing processes

#### TACTICS

- 1 Form teams representing engineering, manufacturing and IT responsible for the design and manufacture of engine components
- 2 Replace the current 32 CAD/CAM systems with a single system across engineering and manufacturing
- 3 Deploy 2,500 engineering workstations to support CAD/CAM and to augment mainframe computing

Notice the flow and the increasing level of specificity at each stage.

### The Real World

Now let's assume your company is like 90% or more of today's corporations. There isn't a "real" strategic plan. Or, if there is, it doesn't pass the test of being executable, measurable and value-creating. What do you as the CIO do? You could build an IT strategic plan in the absence of a good company strategic plan,

## DON'T GO IT ALONE

Compare notes with your No. 2 immediately following interviews with business leaders.

Use the "leg learn" approach in your presentation to the senior management team.

Never talk to the CEO about a dispute or problem you're having with one of his direct reports without having that person in the room and without having preceded the conversation with that person in advance.

But you'll probably end up talking to an outplacement counselor sooner rather than later if you did. You could rile up the CEO by pointing out that what passes for a strategic plan is meaningless garbage. Or, being smart, you could decide to synthesize a corporate strategy plan on which to base your IT strategic plan.

Begin with goals. How do you get to understand the company's real goals and strategies? How do you determine the corresponding IT goals? Talk to the right people. You and your No. 2, or second in command, should meet with each of the senior executives who have profit-and-loss targets or who have to answer directly to the stockholders. Their titles include CEO, COO, CFO, VP of production, chief engineer and VP of sales. Ask them about their goals, strategies and tactics. Ask them how IT can support them.

You'll find that these senior executives love to talk about goals and strategies. After all, goals drive their day-to-day lives. They may be financial goals, production goals, quality goals, sales goals or customer-satisfaction goals, but you'll find they will be measurable, concrete and value-creating, with a one- to three-year realization horizon. They won't be fuzzy, emotional or politically correct. Their goals are the reality that drive the company and should drive you as the CIO. Their strategies will focus on deployment of their people and financial resources and on cooperation with other senior executives.

My experience has been that these leaders will also be open to discussing the role IT has played and can play in their areas of responsibility. You'll have to "drain the swamp" before you start getting constructive input on IT, but it's worth it.

Compile the results of all your interviews. Meet with your staffers. Review your work with them. Look for common elements among the goals you've heard. Start working out which IT strategies will be required to achieve the key executives' goals and support their strategies. Do your own priority stack of the goals and strategies based on your view of their relative impact on the company.

The senior executives will be strong on goals and strategies but weak on tactics. You'll have to drop down a level or two to get this input. Go visit some key middle managers. If you're in a manufacturing

company, be sure to talk to some key shop foremen. Tell them what you're doing and ask for help. Show them the goals and strategies you've heard. Most likely, they will be able to tell you what tactics they're using to achieve them.

Put your findings and recommendations into a concise presentation outlining what you heard and what you're recommending that IT do. Include a description of the resources you will need to carry out your plan and the support you will need from the senior management team.

Then visit the CEO and go through your presentation. Don't share names, but do share what you heard and your conclusions. Ask if you've got them correctly prioritized.

Suggest to the CEO that you incorporate his reaction to your plan and then share it with the senior management team in an upcoming senior staff meeting. I'll bet he jumps on the suggestion.

Include your No. 2 in your presentation to the senior management team, and compare notes afterward.

Then meet with your direct reports and outline a presentation to be given to the entire IT organization. Plan for a lengthy Q&A session. After all, you're sharing some pretty interesting stuff with them, and they probably will have some really good input.

Keep the plan fresh. Meet periodically with the

## PLANNING TRAPS

• A common error is to mistake the company's mission statement as representative of its goals. Most of these high-sounding statements are totally content free and remarkably interchangeable among U.S. corporations. Test the value of the mission statement. Is it executable? Can you measure it? Does it improve shareholder or employee value? If not, stick it into your lower desk drawer and throw it away.

• Another way to mess up is to turn the planning process over to staff groups and consultants. My experience is that neither has a clue about the realities of the business. Staffers don't have production quotas or deployment deadlines, and consultants deal only with their own sales quotas, which are most often in direct conflict with your goals. This has to be your plan, and you have to be involved personally.

same senior managers and review how things are going. Listen hard for early signs of trouble. Review your metrics with them at a summary level so they know how you're performing; against the plan you've agreed to execute. Review your plans and status with the CEO as well. Keep him informed about issues you're encountering.

Remember, the secret to successful strategic business and IT planning is to follow the sequence of goals, strategies and tactics. If you get this right and take advantage of the steps I've outlined, you'll be one of those CIOs who beats the 18-month tenure average. And, you'll be cashing some big bonus checks as well. ☐ 92343

Lewis, a CIO for 17 years, is the founder and senior partner of The Edge Consulting Group LLC in Atlanta. He can be reached at edgeconsulting@bellsouth.net.



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## QUICK HITS

What change, if any, do you expect to see in the volume of customer interactions in the following channels over the next two years?

**WEB**  
Small increase  
80%

Significant increase  
11%

**E-MAIL**  
Significant decrease  
2%

Small decrease  
2%

Small increase  
34%

Significant increase  
40%

**PHONE SELF-SERVICE**  
Small decrease  
0%

Small increase  
49%

Significant increase  
20%

**CALL CENTERS**  
Significant decrease  
0%

Small decrease  
23%

Small increase  
20%

Significant increase  
17%

How important is it for your firm to shift customer interactions to the following channels in 2007?

**WEB**  
Very important  
40%

Critical  
24%

**PHONE SELF-SERVICE**  
Very important  
10%

Critical  
7%

Source: ITW Research Group

BARBARA GOMOLSKI

# Are You Really Customer-centric?

IT HAS BECOME FASHIONABLE — even essential — to be a “customer-centric” organization. As consumers, we’re bombarded with messages from insurance companies, retail stores and health care providers telling us that we come first.

Of course, these are the same companies that make mistakes on our bills and won’t let us talk to a live person on the phone. Saying your organization is customer-centric and then failing to deliver is worse than just providing bad service in the first place. Once you say you’re customer-centric, customers reasonably think

that they are the priority. So it’s an even bigger blow when the organization fails them. If you claim the customer-centric label and deliver, however, you have probably got a customer for life.

These days, the customer-centric label is being applied to more and more IT organizations. It seems that just about every CIO I talk to believes that he sits atop a customer-centric organization. But in reality, few IT organizations are truly customer-centric. Most are what I call customer-aware. That is, they have a pretty good idea of what their customers want, but they aren’t prepared to deliver on those wishes.

Before you brand your IT organization as customer-centric, take a look at some attributes of customer-centric IT groups and make sure you and your group are really prepared to live up to the high expectations you’ll be setting.

■ **A customer-centric IT organization delivers, markets and sells its services from the customers’ point of view.** To be truly customer-centric, the IT group has to be known and valued by the rest of the organization. This means that IT can’t

be the modern-day equivalent of the “guys in the basement.” IT services must be recognizable to clients, and IT must offer something that clients are willing to pay for.

If your company were about to outsource an IT service, such as desktop support, the prospective IT services provider would come in with a very clear description of what it does, the value it would bring to your organization and the costs. An internal IT group must do the same if it wishes to be seen as customer-centric.

■ **A customer-centric IT organization never says no.** I still meet many CIOs who believe it’s their job to be the gatekeeper, hall monitor or equivalent person in their organizations. These well-meaning people actually tell their customers no all the time. No, you can’t have that software. No, we can’t meet that deadline. No, we can’t provide that service. In the customer-centric IT organization, “no” is not in the vocabulary. Anything can be done — at a cost.

Customer-centric IT organizations control demand by using a financial model that helps customers balance

the costs and benefits of their requests. In other words, instead of saying no, they let the customer decide whether a particular product or service passes the cost-benefit test.

■ **A customer-centric IT organization knows and understands its customers.** If an IT organization is isolated from, or unfamiliar with, its customers, it can’t succeed. Too often, CIOs fail because they’re bogged down in technology issues and don’t see huge problems that exist in their service delivery and credibility.

At the top, the CIO needs to know the CEO and other top executives as peers. At the project level, relationship managers need to be able to work closely with line-of-business leaders. At the service-desk level, IT professionals need to be aware of the nature of the work performed by the company’s end users.

■ **A customer-centric organization is market-driven.** In other words, the products and services offered by customer-centric IT organizations match the needs of the customers. An aggressive and entrepreneurial user base has a different IT wish list than do users in a mature industry who are looking to minimize cost. A customer-centric IT group matches its services to the needs of the organization in which it exists.

I don’t mean to discourage organizations from pursuing a customer-centric focus. (I would caution against using the term customer-*intimate*, however. Most of us want a lot of things from IT, but intimacy isn’t one of them.) If you decide to claim the customer-centric title, be prepared. Your customers will expect you to deliver. ☎ 52542

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# KNOWLEDGE CENTER IT MANAGEMENT

02.21.05

## The Vendor Management Office

These groups, like the one CIO Jim Lester set up at AFLAC, can be effective for centralizing procurement, monitoring relationships and cutting costs. Here's how companies are learning to get the most out of their vendors. Page 38

## Tough Tactics

Expert Joe Auer offers tips for hardball negotiating with technology vendors Page 40

## OPINION

### Going 'Global'

Managing IT vendors isn't something that stops at the corporate data center or even inside IT itself, says columnist Mark Hall. Page 43

## EDITOR'S NOTE

ONCE, I WAS TRYING to interview a CIO in his office, but his phone kept ringing every few minutes with sales calls. He'd pick up the phone, bark some command like "Mail me some stuff!" and slam down the phone to resume our interview. I've also heard tales of vendor reps roaming the halls — not only the halls of the IT shop, but of the executive suite, too, trying to bend the ear of the chief financial officer.

It's time to take control, or else the vendors will control you. This special report will give you ideas for being more assertive. You'll learn how to set up a vendor management office, negotiate contracts and screen those calls!

I know — the vendors want to be your "partner," as they say. CIOs fall into three camps on this notion: those who want vendors to be partners, those who see vendors as adversaries and those who take the middle ground. "I use the word *partner* very carefully," says Jean Holley, CIO at Tellabs. "Of all the companies we do business with, only a handful are partners that we share our strategy with."

My view is that in a capitalist society, buyers and sellers are supposed to have arm's-length transactions, not sweetheart deals. That doesn't mean people have to be nasty, only prudent. As IT negotiating expert Joe Auer says: "It's a fantasy that it's a partnership. Vendors use the term all the time, but about the only way it's really a partnership is that you divide things down the middle — they take all the money, you take all the risk." © 02/05

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# Guide to Managing Vendors

Learn how to take control  
of the relationship.



# Getting to Know You

A healthy partnership with a technology vendor requires two-way information flow. By Mary Brandel

**P**ICK UP NEARLY any piece of technology product literature today, and it will proclaim not only the vendor's desire to sell you a "solution" but also the vendor's desire to become your "partner." But for veteran technology buyers, there is a fine distinction between a partner and a vendor.

"I use the word *partner* very carefully," says Jean Holley, senior vice president and CIO at Tellabs Inc., a telecommunications equipment maker in Naperville, Ill. "Of all the companies we do business with, only a handful are partners that we share our strategy with."

Little wonder: In order to establish a true partnership with a technology vendor, you need to get to know each other — intimately. That means taking the time to pave a two-way street for information to flow freely in both directions. "A partnership is like a marriage, where it's only natural to know each other's dirty secrets," says Michael Mah, an analyst at Cutter Consortium in Arlington, Mass.

But some CIOs agree that rather than letting that depth of knowledge grow naturally over time, you need to ask lots of questions, ensure that you're getting honest answers and provide a high level of candor in return.

Skipping this due-diligence stage can bring about disastrous results, such as hiring a vendor that is all about the profit, says Jesus Arriaga, vice president and CIO at Keystone Automotive Industries Inc. in Pomona, Calif. "They know they can come in, change you on an hourly basis, and if you're not careful, they're gone. You need to start an honest relationship from the beginning," he says.

Knowing what you're looking for is the first step. Here are 10 questions you should ask to determine whether you can trust a vendor as a partner.

## 1 Who are some of your customers?

The point here isn't to check on official reference accounts, which are bound to be success stories, but to talk with customers who aren't pre-qualified. Holley gets account names from sales reps or someone even higher up a vendor's food chain. When she knows the CIO at the account, "I'll pick up the phone and ask what their experience has been," she says. This research yields hidden land mines, as well as out-and-out embellishments. "I've had vendors say, 'We've done business with such-and-such company for years,' and I'll place a phone call and [learn that] it isn't true," says Holley.



Even if you can't get the name of a nonreference account, try to get the vendor to divulge details on projects that went south. "We toss out negative questions to see what the response will be, like, 'What have you done when a customer had a downed system?'" says Arriaga. He also asks what happened, how the problem was resolved and how quickly it was resolved.

**2 What is your previous experience in your industry?** It's not always vital to choose a vendor with experience in your industry, but you want to know if it understands industry jargon, if it's just breaking into the market, if it can parlay experience from other industries and whether it's working with any of your competitors, says Holley.

In some cases, it might make sense to leverage the experience of a software vendor that provides applications to your competitors. But as Holley points out, if you want to differentiate yourself in a strategic area such as customer relationship management, the opposite would be true.

At St. Luke's Health System Inc. in Kansas City, Mo., CIO John Wade goes so far as to ask partners to work with companies in his region for a five-year period once he has divulged the health center's business plan. "It's human nature that if you're with one of our competitors and you're doing a planning engagement for them, you could blurt out, 'Well, St. Luke's is doing such-and-such,'" he says.

**3 Can you provide data on recently completed projects?** If you were building a house, you'd ask the contractor to tell you about previous projects. However, most technology providers don't keep this type of data at their fingertips, Mah says.

"When a vendor says it can do a job, there has to be a way to corroborate that it took this many people, it lasted this long, it cost this much, and here's how much functionality and reliability we delivered. You'd think that would be a reasonable set of questions," he says. If you can't get that information, there's no way to judge the legitimacy of the proposal, Mah says.

**4 What is your fiscal calendar?** Knowing the vendor's calendar can offer insight into what drives its pricing, sales compensation — and even its level of customer service.

"We get a lot more customer attention the month or two where Microsoft is doing its customer-satisfaction sur-

## What to Divulge About Your Company

ONCE YOU'VE DECIDED that a technology vendor is worth getting close to, there isn't much that you should hold back on when it comes to sharing information about your company. "We need to be just as open as we expect them to be," says Keystone Automotive's CIO, Jesus Arriaga. The key is to have the vendor sign a nondisclosure agreement so you can share information freely.

St. Luke's CIO John Wade asks vendors to sign nondisclosure agreements while he's still at the narrowest-down stage. "If you can operate in a very open environment like that, you'll tend to make a better selection," he says.

Tellabs CIO Jean Holley says you need to share everything, from historical drivers and challenges you've had with technology adoption to the business goals for using their products or services, as well as corporate hierarchy and reporting relationships. Be clear about your own business cycle, so the vendor isn't pitching ideas that don't fit

in with your calendar or strategies.

Be adamant about whatever business area the vendor is targeting, says Arriaga. For instance, when Keystone was choosing a customer-service outsourcing partner, "we were very upfront with what we were looking for and in some cases very stern about what our philosophy was," he says.

One of the few areas that you need to be at least a little cagey about is financial disclosures. Even if a nondisclosure agreement is signed, caution employees about speaking out of line. "We try to educate people as to who should be the mouthpiece [for news like acquisitions or revenue growth] and how far to take conversations," Holley says.

Mistakes happen. For example, an employee might comment on the difficulty of pushing through a reorganization because the numbers aren't looking good. "You don't want someone commenting on that," Holley points out.

— Mary Brandt

veys," Holley says. "I now hold them to that performance throughout that year."

But having this information and using it to your advantage means weighing the lower price against the business benefit. "If I stall the vendor into the fourth quarter, maybe I'll get a few more dollars shaved off the sale price, but what is the cost to my business to delay that decision?" Wade points out.

**5 Can our CFO meet your CFO?**

When it comes to a vendor's financial status, call in the experts, Arriaga advises. "Ask for their full financials and set up a meeting between the CFOs," he says.

Don't wait too long to do this financial check, Holley says. At Tellabs, the financials group checks the vendor's numbers at the same time that her group is establishing the contractual agreement. "You need to learn on other departments in the company," she says. And remember — you're not looking for a company that will last forever. In reality, five years is enough, Wade says. "I can suffer not having the vendor around in the last year or so of the product cycle," he says.

**6 How big is your workforce, and what part is offshore or off-shore?** Clients need to know not only how many members of the project

team are U.S.-based vs. foreign-based, but also how that affects components of the final price, Mah says. "You want to know the mix of people doing the engineering for you," he says. "If people are offshore, there's a higher risk of domain knowledge being absent." Mah refers to a health insurance company that decided not to go with a particular vendor because it was using a high ratio of offshore programmers, who he didn't understand the nuances of U.S. health insurance.

Another twist on this question is knowing what levels of staff are based in the U.S. vs. offshore. "If you heard the management people are all offshore but that they'll fly in once a month with a translator, that's probably not going to work," Wade says.

**7 What's your corporate hierarchy?**

Knowing who reports to whom becomes important when you need to escalate a problem, Holley points out. It's also a useful perspective to have when you need to respond to calls from a variety of people in the organization, she says.

**8 What if...?** There may be no better way to see a vendor's true colors than to ask questions to which you already know the answers.

"We like throwing out concepts and

infrastructure ideas we have and hearing either validation or new solutions," Arriaga says. "We also play devil's advocate — even if we know something is not the right thing to do, we like to hear their response."

**9 Who is our account manager?**

After a few instances of account managers changing midstream, Arriaga now asks the vendor to appoint an account manager at the onset of negotiations and guarantee that that individual will remain in that role.

To make sure it's a good fit, Arriaga drills the account manager about his skills and asks for customer references. "Once we find the right person, we're bulldozers about keeping him on the account," he says.

**10 What is your business plan?**

An essential step is signing a nondisclosure agreement and viewing a five-year road map of the vendor's technology and strategic plan. This enables you to map the life cycle of what you're purchasing back to your business needs and IT strategy.

"Are you the first one to trial the product, or [are you] buying it at a fire-sale price?" Holley asks. "You should intentionally know that."

This is also the time to see if there's a healthy alignment between your two organizations. Does the vendor plan to continue focusing on your industry? Is it expanding into technology that will become important to you or your industry, such as electronic outpatient records in health care?

Wade says that one of his favorite tactics is to ask what the vendor sees on the horizon that will affect its business and what it plans to do about it. "You've got to be credible to stand up to this type of scrutiny," he says.

In one instance, Wade says, a major health care software vendor refused to share its business plan for fear the plans would change and thus be misleading. While there was pressure to simply trust the vendor based on its reputation, Wade decided to eliminate the vendor from the running. "You don't bankroll the show on, 'Trust us,'" he says. ☐ 52095

Brandt is a Computerworld contributing writer in Grand Rapids, Mich. Contact her at mary.brandt@comcast.net.

### RETIROING VENDOR MANAGEMENT

OPINION: Columnist Theodore A. May offers a three-step approach to effective vendor management.

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# The Vendor Management Office

## HOW TO CREATE IT

**T**EN YEARS BEFORE Jim Lester became CIO at AFLAC, he worked for a vendor that sold property and casualty insurance software. In the worst client meeting he can recall, two managers nearly came to blows over whether their insurance company needed the software he was pitching.

"I kind of slipped out the door and took the quickest plane home," says Lester. But the encounter also helped convince him of the need to set up a vendor management office (VMO) when he became the CIO at Columbus, Ga.-based AFLAC Inc. in 2001.

Recalling the days when he worked for vendors, Lester says, "I've been treated like a king and as a peasant. So I wanted to create a climate where [vendors] felt comfortable discussing their product offerings and made sure we connected them with the right people."

AFLAC, short for the American Family Life Assurance Company of Columbus, is just one of a growing number of companies setting up VMOs to more effectively manage their vendor relationships. "It's becoming massive," says Howard Rubin, executive vice president at Meta Group Inc. He predicts that in 10 years, organizations

will buy hardware and software capacity and functionality from a network of vendors. As a result, says Rubin, vendor management "will be the core of IT economics."

To launch a VMO, most organizations start by naming an IT manager who is an effective communicator and is well versed in managing relationships between vendors, business leaders and the IT department. These leaders then typically hand-pick a few savvy IT managers who either have experience dealing with certain types of vendors (for example, hardware, software or service providers) or are skilled in contract negotiations or overseeing service-level agreements.

Vendor managers then compile a list of the top vendors they work with to help manage those relationships and develop a standardized set of vendor performance metrics if they aren't already in place.

For the moment, organizations such as Southern Co. are leveraging their VMOs to get the most out of their vendor relationships.

"We do business with hundreds of vendors, and you can't have the same level of relationships with all of them," says Jim Trupiano, technology contracts manager at Southern, a super-regional energy company in Atlanta.

Shortly after the utility established its VMO in mid-2004, it decided to identify the top 35 vendors it works with. It made the importance of prod-

## FIRST STEPS

When choosing vendors to run the VMO, look for a proven leader who understands business, business and vendor requirements.

Don't be afraid to use existing resources to get the VMO started.

Establish criteria for identifying your top vendors.

Put vendor management in an existing system so that it doesn't fit for IT managers to use.

Use the VMO to manage the relationship with vendors, not just the product.

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ucts and the amount of dollars spent the top criteria, says Trupiano.

Now, Trupiano and his team of six vendor managers are in the midst of developing a scorecard aimed at tracking key performance indicators for vendors. These include tracking whether purchasing hardware warranties made financial sense based on the failure rates of equipment and the cost of sending the equipment back to the vendor versus fixing it in-house.

## Bang for the Buck

Southern also plans to evaluate the levels of software maintenance agreements it has with vendors (such as gold, platinum and silver) and whether the company is getting its money's worth out of them. "If I paid a gold premium for 24/7 support and I only called the vendor five times, was that worth it over the course of the year?" asks Trupiano, who adds that his group plans to have its performance scorecards in use by this spring.

Metrics used to gauge vendor performance vary based on the types of products and services being provided, say VMO managers.

For instance, United Parcel Service Inc. tracks service-level agreements on its telecommunications contracts, says Gary Kallenbach, vice president of information services at the logistics company's Mahwah, N.J., data center.

For vendors that provide hardware support, UPS monitors how quickly they responded to a problem, like whether they met a two-hour response requirement on a service-level agreement. It also monitors the amount of time that application development



A former CIO, Lester helped create the VMO at AFLAC, which is now negotiating with vendors to get the most out of their product offerings. (Photo: iStockphoto.com)



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contractors spend each week on a project.

Some VMOs have vendor managers who specifically focus on hardware, software or services vendors—but that isn't always the case. "We sort of look at vendors in three categories: strategic, tactical and commodity vendors," with the last category referring to those that provide items such as printers, says Lester.

At the Guardian Life Insurance Company of America in New York, one vendor manager focuses on consulting vendors while another works on contracts, terms and conditions with all vendors. A third person focuses on sourcing and the request-for-proposal process, says Rick Omartian, the company's IT chief financial officer and chief of staff, who also runs the VMO.

Guardian Life launched its VMO in 2001, after Dennis Callahan arrived as CIO. At the time, the company was working with more than 200 consultants, with "few if any standard contracts in place," says Omartian.

Now, Guardian's senior IT executives and executives from its top 25 vendor partners meet monthly to discuss how well the vendors are meeting key performance criteria in their contracts, such as the number of defects, delivery times and utilization rates, on a scale of 1 to 10.

"Then we review the scorecard with the vendor and discuss where they can improve with us and look for feedback from them on how we can improve the relationship," says Omartian.

Many organizations with VMOs have been able to generate impressive cost savings after standardizing their IT procurement efforts and leveraging relationships with their biggest vendors across multiple geographic areas or business divisions.

For instance, AFLAC realized seven-figure savings in each of the first three years after its VMO was launched, says Lester.

But Lester and other IT leaders say it's sometimes a struggle to get both vendors and business-unit leaders to consistently secure IT contracts through the VMO.

"Vendors adapt, and some of them would rather not deal with IT or the VMO and try to go directly to the customers," says Lester. "It's just a tough nut to crack." ■ **EW07**

## HOW TO STAFF IT

### WANTED:

**Vendor Manager**—a must! **Superstar.** A technology guru with thorough knowledge of hardware, software and systems, plus awareness of business unit needs. Must be a creative negotiator with stellar communication skills and experience in finance, contract law and relationship management. Ideal candidate is willing to confront vendors, call their bluff, shake trees and keep vendors honest. Ability to create win-win solutions a must.

Sound like a tall order? An IT worker with these skills would slam-dunk an interview for a vendor management position.

Managing vendor relationships is no longer as easy as appointing a technology employee to be the company's official representative. Outsourcing, the trend toward longer and more complex deals, and an increase in the number of vendors of all sizes have prompted companies to rethink the skills and experience required to manage these contracts on a daily basis. For many companies, the technology and business units must join forces.

"We started to realize that the IT organization is only as good as the vendors," says Guy Russo, senior vice president of finance and information services at CommunityAmerica Credit Union. "It's a catch-22. If a vendor is not meeting its SLA, it's very difficult for the IT organization to commit to its SLAs." Two years ago, the Lenexa, Kan.-based company began moving contract responsibility from its business units to the IT department after the technology staff learned that contracts were being signed by people with no understanding of the technology commitments they were making.

Three IT directors suddenly found themselves managing dozens of vendor contracts. Russo's team quickly realized that the only way to cover all its bases was to pair IT with business unit reps on each vendor engagement. "It's a team-oriented approach. The IT side will look under the hood," while the business side focuses on meeting its needs, Russo says.

Beyond skills, vendor managers

need to develop a flare for relationship-building, says Chris Ambrose, an analyst at Gartner Inc. "It's a combination of skills, knowledge and learning that individuals have to develop over time."

"The people who understand the art of negotiation are hard to find—especially within IT," says Ron Strout, senior vice president of strategy and governance at State Street Corp. in Boston. "IT people tend to think a little bit in black and white. What's more, there are two sides to IT. You get the group that doesn't trust any vendor and the group that falls in love with the vendor, and they almost get religion."

Strout's four-person team manages interactions with Oracle Corp. and several offshore vendors. Though the homegrown team has an IT background, other skills are equally important. "You have to understand when to be tough with the vendor and when to give the vendor a break," Strout says. "When you're managing strategic vendors, you can't be negotiating with them all the time. You also have to understand when it's time to collaborate, be partners and do them a favor."

## SKILLS

### Develop Talent In-house

While there's no one-size-fits-all solution to vendor management, there are several ways to fill the skills gap.

Ambrose suggests developing the skills internally. "They need to look beyond the IT organization—reach back into the biz organizations and pull people with a business background and get them the technology understanding that they need," he says. "But it's not going to happen overnight."

Vendor managers also sharpen skills by attending research-firm conferences and seminars, along with ven-

dors' user-group meetings, says Strout. "It's very important to get into the mix with some other companies that are doing vendor management on a similar scale to what we have," he says.

### Search Outside the Firm

Sometimes the combination of skills needed to manage vendors requires an outside search. "If one of the people on my team were to leave, I would look outside the company," says Tom Ciardella, director of strategic sourcing at Chicago Mercantile Exchange Inc. "I want to make sure they have the fundamentals of procurement. They need to understand how the process works, what we as a company look for and what the vendor would look for. If they have worked for one of these vendors, that's always a huge plus."

In the short term, some companies look to a service provider for vendor management expertise. "Bring in somebody who has been on the other side of the equation, who understands these issues," Ambrose says. "They can help build the organization's relationship management, performance management and contract management skills and abilities."

With the raw talent in place, Strout advises companies to give vendor managers room to grow. "Give them some slack. Let them get their own wins," he says. "The vendor has to know that the person they're dealing with has some authority or empowerment. Otherwise, they give a nod and a wink and go up to the next level. Let [the vendor manager] know they have the backing of your management team." ■ **EW06**

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## Separate the Skills

**TWO YEARS AGO**, Arrow Electronics Inc. revamped its entire vendor management practice as a new CIO took charge and challenged the Melville, N.Y.-based company to become a more service-oriented organization.

With a growing and increasingly diverse vendor portfolio and a new emphasis on outsourcing, Arrow created a vendor management office to manage its 10 premier, 20 preferred and 150 standard vendors. But staffing the office required a complex blend of skills.

"We took the contractual piece and the negotiations out of the functional areas and moved them to the VMO,"

explains Ash Brooks, vice president of both IT infrastructure and operations and the vendor management office. That requires a background in finance, contract law and, last, technology. "But the technology people—they're the ones who you want to maintain the relationship," says Brooks. "It's a good idea to have the VMO office disconnected from that because they can lean on the vendor from a contractual standpoint, but you maintain a good working relationship with your functional departments. It allows you to save face and have a good working relationship with the vendor."

—Stacy Collett

# Tough Tactics

Joe Auer gives the straight scoop on hardball negotiating.



**FEW READERS** require an introduction to **JOE AUER**. He has been offering procurement and negotiation advice for nearly 30 years through his consultancy—Winter Park, Fla.-based International Computer Negotiations Inc.—

and, for several years, in an award-winning Computerworld column. Computerworld contributing writer Steve Ulicker recently sat down with Auer to discuss hardball negotiating.

**Is it a good idea to play hardball with vendors? Don't you risk alienating a long-term partner?** First, it's a fantasy that it's a partnership. Vendors use the term all the time, but about the only way it's really a partnership is that you divide things down the middle—they take all the money, you take all the risk.

Having said that, sure, at some point the adversarial relationship does need to translate into an ongoing business relationship. That's largely a matter of style and approach. Suppliers respect companies that negotiate with them aggressively and correctly. Many years ago when I was on the vendor side, if somebody just accepted our deal and paid our price, we left the room and said, "Can you believe how much those jerks left on the table?"

You can't love suppliers into a good deal; you've got to leverage them. Look at it this way: If you don't negotiate aggressively, you won't protect your

company and you'll make a lousy deal.

**Should IT managers play vendors off each other?** Of course. Probably the biggest problem I see [with clients] is that people select a vendor before they negotiate. Not only that, they tell [the vendor] they have been selected, and the project time frame and the competitive pressures they're facing, etc. They become more and more dependent on the vendor. Then, when they've got no more options, they say, "OK, let's negotiate." What is the supplier's motivation to negotiate then? They know you're committed. They know your timetable. They don't have to meet your needs, etc. They just need to dance around while the clock runs. We advise clients to narrow it down to at least two vendors, possibly three, and talk to negotiate terms with them all.

In fact, sophisticated companies have their own contracts, written from the user's point of view. You put that contract right in your request for proposal and send it to vendors. "We want you to accept these provisions or tell us in writing what you can't accept." This is effective because it's early in the process, when there's a lot of pressure to win your business. The suppliers are worried that their competition is meeting your demands.

**Don't vendors need a certain amount of information to meet the buyer's needs?** Yes. The problem is that if you give out all this information before you've picked a supplier, your leverage is gone. In negotiation, information is power—and generally, purchasers give the vendor way too much information.

**In fact, it's a good idea to demand information of your own right at the very start.** Many IT managers don't know it, but the sales rep you meet with early in the cycle probably lacks the authority to make a lot of concessions. So I may say to a vendor, "I need a detailed open chart right from you, up to the person who's going to sign the contract—names, titles, contact info." You need to get up to the top guys for the best deals—that's just a fact.

**In addition to the bottom line, what parts of vendor contracts should people address when they're playing hardball?** There are four. Every vendor contract has a "disclaimer of fitness for purpose" provision that says the product won't necessarily do what they're selling it to you for. Radical.

Also, when the sales rep tells you, "We're going to give you the best deal we've ever given anybody," you should say, "No, let's put that in writing." Insert a "favored customer" provision that guarantees this is the lowest price and that if you ever learn of someone else getting a better deal, you are entitled to that deal retroactively.

**Other tips?** Get formal training in procurement and negotiation. The vendors' people get, what, 10 to 20 times as much training as the buyers?

In general, keep in mind that there are a tremendous number of concessions not given simply because they're not asked for. Many people will do a deal with a vendor without ever hearing "No," without an excuse, without a deadline. If that's the case, you just overpaid. **◆ 51966**

**Ulicker** is a Computerworld contributing writer in Southport, Mass. Contact him at [sulfid@charter.net](mailto:sulfid@charter.net).

## DRIVING THE DEAL

Read vendor management expert Joe Auer's full collection of Computerworld columns.

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## FROM SALESMAN TO CIO

**MICHAEL TAYLOR IS CIO AT TODD PACIFIC SHIPBUILDING CORP. IN SEATTLE**—but that's not why I called him. Once upon a time, Taylor was a sales rep for Unisys Corp., back when the company was going up against IBM for enterprise hardware and software business.

Given the challenges of competing with IBM during its heyday, it's no surprise that now, on the other side of the table, Taylor says he's "known as a pretty good negotiator." I asked him what IT purchasers don't know about vendors that might help them play a little hardball.

**■ Be realistic.** Vendors are willing to move—a lot, in some cases—but nothing demands negotiations like a buyer who demands that

the supplier give away the store. "The IT person needs to know the vendor's got to make money," Taylor says, quickly adding, "But not too much."

**■ Control the process.** *[For sales reps, this means think, you do.]* "Vendors are always looking for who's got the purchasing power," Taylor says. So simply that you do. Don't give them a ball and run down on all the signatures needed to green-light a purchase; they'll just use the information to end-run around you.

**■ Stay strong on other projects.** Another key data point for vendors is the number of significant IT projects in your company, according to Taylor. The more projects, the less likely vendors are to go all-out on your deal—they're wor-

ried you'll lack the budget to finalize the sale, so why knock themselves out on your account? During the early, getting-to-know-you phase of negotiation, make it appear that your purchase is the company's primary IT initiative.

**■ Listen like deer ears.** "You always should have a second or third bidder out there" for major business, Taylor says. As an example, he mentions that Todd Pacific is presently sourcing a \$250,000 to \$500,000 enterprise network. One provider has won over Taylor's team, while the other has made a poor impression. (Taylor declined to name the vendors but says both are well known.) "We're pretty well set on the one provider," he says. "But we're going to keep the other group around just to add some pressure."

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## FROM SALESMAN TO CIO





**IBM**

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IBM TotalStorage®



# Cold-Call Cascade

Tips for dodging some of those pesky technology pitches. By Steve Ulfelder

**"I** ALMOST NEVER pick up the phone unless I recognize the caller" says Caller ID, says Liz Parker, CIO at Thotts Insurance Service Inc. Lately, however, she has found herself stuck on the line with more vendor sales reps, and Parker thinks she knows why. Her voice-mail message lets callers transfer to the receptionist at the Mountain View, Calif.-based insurer. Industrious sales reps have figured out that if they do this and then ask to be transferred back to Parker, they'll show up on Caller ID as an internal call and she will pick up. "They're very creative," Parker says, with grudging admiration. The deluge of vendor pitches shows

no signs of slowing. And because of tight regulations surrounding faxes and e-mail, the telephone is the salesperson's weapon of choice. So we thought this was a good time to ask some IT managers who make technology purchase decisions what new tactics vendors are using to get their attention.

## Unintended Consequences

Nobody ever warned IT managers that the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act (CAN-SPAM), which has been in effect for more than a year, would increase their ration of cold calls. But it did. Unsolicited faxes have been outlawed since 1991, and when CAN-SPAM put a similar choke on unsolicited e-mail pitches, sales representatives from the estimated 255,000 technology vendors in North America started smiling and dialing.

It's an understatement to say that many of those dialers are ineffective. "Most salespeople [in the industry] today have no idea how to sell IT," says Paul R. DiModica, president of DigitalHatch Inc. in Peachtree City, Ga., one of the country's largest IT sales training companies.

"Most people who came into IT sales in the last 10 years grew up in an inbound market," DiModica says, referring to a market in which customers with fat budgets called vendors. "The greatest inbound IT buying ever" happened between 1995 and 2000, he says.

Needless to say, everything changed when the year 2000 rollover was successfully addressed. The stock market, led by the dot-coms, crumbled, and IT budgets shrank dramatically. "In today's outbound market, [salespeople] need to create value" in a phone call, DiModica says. DigitalHatch teaches salespeople to make a compelling case in their first sentence.

Sadly, it appears that not enough reps take such courses. IT managers say the majority of the cold calls that slip through to them are what Michael Taylor, CIO at Todd Pacific Shipyards Corp. in Seattle, calls "robo-calls."

The calls can even turn downright abusive. "We bought a couple of domain names and started getting calls from salespeople wanting to set up our Web site," recalls Mike Murphy, an IT manager at Kiferbaum Construction Corp. Murphy patiently explained to the salespeople that Kiferbaum, a company in Deerfield, Ill., with revenue of

## TIPS FROM YOUR PEERS

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about \$400 million a year, already had a Web site and was happy with it.

"One woman kept me on the phone 35 minutes," Murphy recalls. Initially polite, the rep got nasty as it became clear she wouldn't win his business. "She said, 'I'm looking at your Web site right now; and it looks terrible.'" Before hanging up, she told Murphy that with a site like that, Kiferbaum was bound to go out of business soon.

Among the IT managers interviewed for this story, there is a grim-and-bear-it attitude toward cold calls. The consensus opinion is that handling somewhere between five and 20 unsolicited calls per day is part of the job — and thank goodness for Caller ID and the delete button on voice mail. **Q 52014**

Ulfelder is a Computerworld contributing writer in Southboro, Mass. Contact him at [sulfelder@charter.net](mailto:sulfelder@charter.net).

## SAVING TIME

There's time for managing calls calls could save you 10 or 20 minutes a day — golden minutes indeed.

IN FROM V TO DISTRICT E. Liz Parker, Thotts Insurance's CIO, gives out her e-mail address to her voice-mail messages and makes it clear that it is the best way to reach her. That turns out well, however, because voice mails into a more manageable number — and Parker even saves some of those e-mail pitches if she wishes they may prove useful later.

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## SAVING TIME

# Go 'Glocal'

**OLD HABITS DIE HARD**, often for good reason. For years, I've been doing business at the local bicycle shop, even though two newer and bigger stores have opened downtown with better selection, lower prices and competent mechanics. My local guy knows me, my bikes

and my riding habits. So, while I pay more and occasionally have to wait longer for service, I think it's worth it.

That's probably the attitude that IT staffers running operations outside of headquarters have about vendors. They know and trust their local resellers and consultants. When these vendors show up at the door, they're familiar with the infrastructure, the applications and the staff.

They know the quirks and the work-arounds sprinkled throughout the IT operations and can avoid the problems these idiosyncrasies would cause for the uninitiated.

But if you run IT for a global company, letting every local shop buy whatever it wants from whomever it wants can be expensive, put your security at risk, create compatibility problems and undermine your company's competitiveness. Corporate IT standards, when properly enforced, aren't just a way for headquarters to flex its bureaucratic muscle; they add value to the company. The key phrase is in that last sentence, of course, is "when properly enforced." That's the tough part.

Kevin Roden, CIO at Iron Mountain in Boston, says his company, which has operations in the U.S., Canada, South America and Europe, strives for a balance between endemic IT needs and a broader corporate strategy.

For example, Iron Mountain establishes "certification standards" for technology and then lets the local IT folks choose suppliers that they're comfortable with, as long as they meet those standards. According to Roden, it's important "to give local staff autonomy, but not such that they diverge so much we couldn't pull it all together."

Christopher Lochhead, chief marketing officer at Mercury Interactive in Mountain View, Calif., calls Iron Mountain's approach "going glocal," combining the best of both IT worlds.

But he warns that CIOs like Roden not only have to oversee vendor management for a distributed IT organization, they also need to keep tabs on their worldwide line-of-business (LOB) managers. These heads of various business units are likely to pay lip service to global standards in meetings, then skulk off afterward and get what they want from whomever they want out of their own budgets. Those of you who suddenly found yourselves inundated with rogue Wi-Fi access points know what Lochhead is talking about.

Lochhead quips that LOB executives can be "firefighters by day and arsonists by night" when it comes to supporting IT standards. Once local LOBs step outside IT's worldwide standards and procurement process, trouble from security issues to compatibility problems is inevitable.

Prohibiting LOBs access to vendors is difficult and probably a waste of time. Both Roden and Lochhead suggest sitting down with these managers who lust for everything from wireless connections to the latest gadgets. Explain to them that denying every salesperson in one region technical support for, say, nifty Treo handhelds isn't an arbitrary exercise in power, but a rational application of business processes that make the company more effective, competitive and profitable.

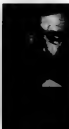
Show them your portfolio management situation. That is, open the books about what you're doing for whom and why. Get them to understand why no is the right answer to their requests. If their arguments are sound and their requests valid, use them to help you make trade-offs in your portfolio by negotiating with other IT constituents to give up or delay their pet projects for something that makes more sense for the company as whole.

Also, make certain that LOBs grasp

that although you're saying no, you're still aware that they might run off and spend their money wherever they want anyway. So, while you may refuse to back their technology investments with help desk or integration support, you can offer them advice on security

and other matters to ensure that company assets aren't put at risk.

Your vendor management strategy needs to run on two wheels — one for IT inside and outside headquarters and another for LOBs. That approach will lead to a smoother ride. **CS570**



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# Life After Carly

**A** READER WRITES: "Say, hypothetically, a person was to work at Hewlett-Packard — here's how I'd imagine people would be feeling right now: Everyone at HP is so demoralized that after all these cost cuts, stealth layoffs, expense and travel reductions, no raises for years, no bonuses, here Carly walks away with all this money after basically running HP into the ground. It's hard to stay motivated under these conditions. Oh well, I'm thinking, tap me on the shoulder for that workforce reduction — I'll take the severance, the unemployment, and have a nice rest."

Y'know, friend, your hypothetical severance package is not going to be quite as good as Carly Fiorina's \$21.4 million, plus financial counseling, legal and outplacement services, six months of secretarial services, a year of home security — and she gets to keep her PC, too. That hypothetical tap on your shoulder may not be all it's cracked up to be.

So what should you do, whether you work at HP or not? Hypothetically, I mean?

First, forget Carly (and all the other overpaid, underperforming CEOs out there). OK, damn her for a day and then forget about it. Tell yourself that \$21 million is a microscopic fraction of HP's annual revenue. Calculate how many engineers that golden parachute would pay for (maybe 200 for a year, another drop in the bucket). Figure out what you'd do with the \$140 that would be your share if they just gave it to the employees instead of to her.

Then forget her. She's gone. At least she won't do any more damage.

Next? Update your résumé. Not just because you might get laid off, not because you might quit. The best part of rebuilding your résumé is to remind yourself where you've come from, what you've accomplished and what your goals are. However miserable things feel now, this is stuff no one can take away from you.

Besides, it's an excuse to revisit both the best and worst jobs you've had — to remember the atrocities and the good times. That's always good for perspective.

Then ask some hard questions. What do you want to do? Can you do it in your current job? Never mind whether other people think you have a great job, whether the job market stinks or how the num-

bers add up. If you can't accomplish what you want to do where you are, you're a short timer, and you should start looking for a place where you can accomplish it.

You probably won't find that place tomorrow. Maybe not before you're laid off. But now's the time to start looking.

On the other hand, if you can see yourself reaching some of those goals where you are now, how can you make that happen? Can you make it happen?

It might be unlikely. Trying to make it a reality might turn you into a prime candidate for the next round of layoffs as a boat-rocking troublemaker. But in that case, you get the package and the unemployment and the hypothetical nice rest, right? And if things come together instead, you get the job you wanted.

For the next few months, HP is going to be in limbo, waiting for a new CEO. You don't want to spend months in limbo. Start asking questions and making plans.

Finally, think about this: HP people — like most IT people — are engineering people. Engineers hate uncertainty. They want to be able to calculate the maximum stresses and then overdesign by 50% so they can stop worrying about things collapsing and get on with the next project.

But right now, HP is underengineered. It really does have stress points that may not be able to handle a sudden change. And it won't be out of danger from unexpected oversteering anytime soon.

I know, that's no comfort. But it may explain why you'll continue to be so uncomfortable if you stay.

And maybe even if you go.

Hypothetically speaking, of course. © 52002



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